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WHEN THE BRITISH WAY LEADS TO BRUSSELS
- NORWAY AND EU DEFENCE COOPERATION

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PREFACE

As a scholar of the EU and as a Norwegian citizen I find Norway’s relationship to EU defence cooperation a natural topic for a dissertation. Within the EU, few areas of integration have developed more rapidly during the last few years than security and defence. And few policy areas have had such a deep impact on Norway. Increased defence cooperation within the EU has challenged the very foundation of Norwegian security and defence policy. An obvious question is: How have Norwegian actors responded to this? And why?

I have been interested in the EU for quite some time, and during my studies in London I spent an entire year studying EU politics. You might find it odd to study the EU in a eurosceptic country as Britain. On the other hand, it was interesting to learn the British view on what the EU could and should be about. I will argue that it is crucial to understand the British change of policy in 1997, to fully understand EU defence cooperation of today. Whereas ‘the British way’ earlier led to Washington, it now leads to Brussels. In this thesis I will study how Norwegian actors reacted to this.

I would like to thank the Norwegian Defence Association for their assistance. They helped me to get primary material, which I would not have accessed without them. I was also lucky to receive a grant from their foundation (Fritt Norge med NATOs legat). In addition I want to thank The Norwegian Atlantic Committee for including me in their study trip to SHAPE and the NATO headquarters. I have been very lucky to have Helene Sjursen as my supervisor, and her guidance has been crucial during the writing process. I also must thank my fiancé, Tonje, for support during an exciting – but at times frustrating – period.

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1 INTRODUCTION

‘There has been more progress on European security and defence issues since 1998 than in the previous 50 years’
Jolyon Howorth¹

This thesis deals with Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. From the early 1990s onwards, the EU members gradually extended the cooperation in this area. This represented a challenge to Norway, as a non-member of the union.

However, the challenge remained moderate as long as the UK insisted on NATO supremacy in European security and defence policy. To the British, US involvement in Europe was of crucial importance. The ‘British way’ therefore led to Washington. This changed fundamentally when Tony Blair took office in 1997. Compared to his predecessor, Blair was a euro-enthusiast. With the Franco-British St. Malo agreement the UK took a leading role in the EU, strongly extending EU defence cooperation. The British way suddenly led to Brussels. In this thesis, I study how Norwegian actors dealt with the changed situation, and I specifically compare Norwegian responses before and after St. Malo.

Theoretically, I concentrate on two main ways of explaining the Norwegian policy. Either it can be seen as a rational strategy conducted by well-informed actors. Or the Norwegian policy can be seen as far less ‘rational’, strongly influenced by norms and culture. In this thesis both rational choice theory and a social constructivist approach will be used.

1.1 The year of 1989 - the end of the world as we knew it

Since the end of the Second World War, Norwegian security has primarily been guaranteed by the USA through NATO. During the Cold War, NATO was the only alliance which could counter the Soviet threat in Europe. Moreover, the alliance became the most important arena in which European security and defence policy was created. Plans for Nordic defence cooperation collapsed, as did plans

¹ Howorth 2001:767.

for a European Defence Community (EDC). The Western European Union (WEU) became a sleeping organisation (Paganon 1997:93).

With some exceptions, this was the situation until the end of the Cold War. In 1989, however, the situation changed dramatically. The USA had less incentive to protect the European continent, as the main reason for doing so (the Soviet Union) had vanished. In the same period there was a renewed interest in European defence cooperation outside the NATO framework. With the Maastricht treaty the EU members stated their intentions to include security in their foreign policy cooperation (CFSP), and maybe also include defence. The WEU would become the instrument for this policy.

Throughout the 1990s there was much discussion and quarrel about the WEU's role. Was the WEU primarily an EU instrument? Or was it a way of organising the European contribution within NATO? At the late 1990s it became clear that the WEU would become an EU instrument outside the NATO-framework. Today, the WEU has become part of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) within the EU².

This development had serious implications for the Norwegian security and defence policy. First, NATO was no longer the only important arena in which European defence policy was created. A new arena emerged, of which Norway was not a member. Second, EU defence cooperation threatened to undermine NATO. This was seen as especially dangerous at a time where the alliance expanded and took on new tasks out of area. It led to a fear that NATO would become less credible as a collective security organisation, and that Norway would be marginalised.

The development represented a huge challenge to Norway. It is no exaggeration that it challenged the very foundation of Norwegian security and

² I will generally use the term 'the European Union' (EU). What was former known as the European Community (EC) became the European Union (EU) with the ratification of the Maastricht treaty 1 November 1993. I will also use the term ESDP. Some authors use the term Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP), for instance Duke 2001. Others use the term European Defence Policy (EDP), for instance Heisbourg 2000. The most common term has now become the ESDP.

defence policy. It is therefore surprising that Norwegian politicians seemed to show quite little interest in EU defence cooperation. Until the Franco-British St. Malo agreement in 1998, Norwegian actors primarily focused on side arenas and apparently doubted further integration in EU defence cooperation. Although the EU countries had been discussing defence cooperation since the early 1990s, there are signs that Norwegian politicians were shocked to find this materialising from 1998 onwards (Sjursen 2001:552, Græger 2002:43, Rieker 2003b:231). Only after 1998, Norwegian actors seemed to believe in further integration in this sector. They also started to focus more on the EU instead of side arenas in European security and defence policy.

How can we explain this? Why were Norwegian actors sceptical to the possibilities of further defence cooperation in the EU? Why the strong focus on side-arenas? And why the sudden change of policy after 1998? A crucial task will be to investigate why Norwegian actors apparently were taken completely by surprise by the Franco-British St. Malo agreement.

The thesis tries to complement existing literature on Norway and the ESDP in two main ways. First, I focus on the differences before and after the St. Malo agreement. I specifically compare the Norwegian policy in the two periods. Second, I elaborate the rationalist perspective by focusing on the domestic level. Existing studies only to some degree discuss actors' interest of avoiding another EU debate as a potential explanatory factor for the Norwegian foreign policy.

Norway's response to EU defence cooperation is also an interesting topic from a theoretical point of view. According to a rationalist perspective, we would expect Norwegian actors to be well aware of changes at the European level. As rationalist theory has traditionally been of particular relevance to the study of foreign policy, we would expect the theory to be relevant in this case as well. But if St. Malo really came as a surprise to Norwegian politicians it contradicts important assumptions made by scholars of rational choice. This might therefore

be seen as a critical case to test whether or not a rationalist perspective is sufficient to understand the Norwegian policy.

Starting point: Norwegian EU policy as a non-member

The starting point of the analysis is the end of the Cold War, but the main focus will be on the period from 1994 onwards. In 1994 a majority of the population decided that Norway should remain outside the EU, and an underlying assumption is that this decision might have influenced Norwegian actors’ opinions of EU defence cooperation. I will study the period until the end of 2003.

Focusing on the Norwegian policy after 1994, two distinct phases can be identified. The first phase from 1994 to 1998 had three specific characteristics. First, there was a focus on side-arenas in European security policy; organisations with only secondary importance to European security. The Norwegian government showed an increasing interest in organisations such as the Nordic Council and the OSCE. Second, there was a strong focus on traditional issues, such as territorial defence and NATO’s important role. Third, Norwegian policy-makers were sceptical to the possibilities of further defence cooperation within the EU. Norwegian actors generally underlined the limits of such cooperation.

The first phase ends with the Franco-British St. Malo agreement of December 1998. This is a crucial turning point as the main obstacle to further defence cooperation within the EU was removed. The involvement of the European Union in defence matters was ‘dropped from the list of British taboos’ (Economist 1998). From now on it was clear that defence cooperation within the EU would not remain a theoretical possibility.

The Norwegian policy changed considerably after St. Malo, in three main ways. First, there was a change of focus, away from political side arenas and towards the ESDP. Second, the focus was no longer only on territorial defence. Participation in international operations was increasingly seen as important to

Norwegian security. Third, Norwegian actors suddenly appeared to believe in further integration in European security and defence policy.

Although it is possible to give a quite clear *description* of the Norwegian policy in this period, an *explanation* of the same policy is far less straightforward. The reason is that there are two fundamentally different ways of explaining the policy. Was the policy based on a deliberate strategy, and were the changes following St. Malo signs of a changed strategy? Or was the Norwegian policy far less rational, and were the changes following St. Malo signs that Norwegian actors had been badly informed? To answer such questions, we need theories that take these considerations into account. In the analysis, I will rely on two different theoretical approaches

The first theory builds on a rationalist perspective, where strategy and interests are key words. An example of such a theory is neorealism, which assumes states to behave rationally and strategically in order to protect their national interests. However, I will not use this theory of two main reasons. First, there is an assumption of states as unitary actors, downplaying the significance of different actors at the domestic level. Second, national interests are seen as very stable over time, making it hard to understand changes.

A theory that takes this criticism into account is Andrew Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism (1998). In his theory, Moravcsik assumes actors to behave rationally, but he develops what he calls a ‘weak rationality assumption’. This will be further elaborated in the next chapter. A hypothesis in accordance with his theory is that *the Norwegian responses were result of a deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation.*

The second approach is based upon a sociological constructivist perspective, with norms, culture and identity as key words. I will rely on the perspective elaborated by Peter J. Katzenstein, with a focus on what he calls the ‘culture of national security’ (Katzenstein 1996). This theory represents a clear challenge to the idea of rationalism, as interests are not given, but constructed

through social interaction. I will include considerations made by Thomas Risse, underlining the role of deliberation and learning processes (Risse 1996, 2000). A hypothesis in accordance with this is that *a particular conception of Norway’s role in European, transatlantic and Nordic relations can best explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation.*

The dependent variable: What is ‘Norwegian responses’?

My dependent variable is ‘Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation’. By ‘responses’ I understand all aspects of the Norwegian foreign, security and defence policy which affected Norway’s relationship to EU defence cooperation. Norwegian actors tried to gain influence in these processes in several ways, for example by contributing troops and military equipment. It is, however, insufficient to study defence policy only. The EU also deals with soft security, as humanitarian aid, crisis management and economic development. Norway has for instance contributed with police officers in EU operations, and purely diplomatic initiatives have also been an important part of Norway’s policy vis-à-vis the ESDP.

A particular problem is related to the EU’s influence on Norwegian policy. It might be difficult to know if Norwegian policy was an explicit response to EU defence cooperation, or if it rather was a response to developments within other organisations. To deal with this, I concentrate on those parts of the Norwegian policy the actors themselves describe as responses to EU defence cooperation. The transformation of the Norwegian armed forces is an important example. Although rapid reaction forces are now a crucial part of the Norwegian policy towards the EU, I do not argue that they were created as a response to EU policy. These were primarily created as a response to NATO pressure, as the alliance took on new tasks during the 1990s. This is reflected in the Norwegian policy of today; if Norway has to choose between NATO operations and EU operations, the former have priority.

It is also necessary to give a more precise definition of 'EU defence cooperation'. This has been a quite controversial issue for decades, but I will mainly focus on recent developments. I will start with the reforms introduced by the Maastricht treaty, which gradually developed into what is now known as the ESDP – defined as 'the security-related novelties that were added to the CFSP from the Amsterdam treaty onwards' (Græger et al. 2002:20).

The independent variables will be based on the two theoretical approaches respectively. According to a rational perspective, the actors' self-interest is what explains the Norwegian responses. According to a constructivist perspective, the actors' foreign policy identity is what explains the outcome. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

As the focus will be on Norwegian policy, the units of study are governments, ministers and their respectable ministries. On the latter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) will be the most important, as these are conducting most of the Norwegian policy vis-à-vis the ESDP. I also include the parliament as a unit of analysis. Although the focus on the parliament is only of secondary importance, there are still important reasons to look at parliamentarians in this context. They have considerable influence on the foreign policy formulation, as all governments from the end of the Cold War onwards have been minority governments. They also have extensive knowledge of Norwegian foreign policy – especially the ones participating in the Defence Committee and the Foreign Policy Committee.

To sum up, I will concentrate on what we might call the Norwegian security policy elite. I regard the actors mentioned to be the most important in developing and influencing Norwegian foreign policy. This is a highly elitist exercise where 'the people' as such are largely excluded. Even parliaments have generally found 'foreign policy a more difficult area in which to hold their governments to account' (Hill and Wallace 1996:6).

1.2 The road ahead: Organisation of the thesis

In the next chapter, I will give an outline of the theoretical framework. I will describe the two theoretical approaches, represented by Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism and Katzenstein/Risse’s social constructivism respectively. Both approaches will be studied and their relevance to Norwegian policy will be discussed.

In chapter 3 I will give a historical outline of Norwegian security and defence policy. I will especially discuss the Norwegian relationship to the EU and NATO in this respect. This is necessary in order to understand the Norwegian policy from 1990 onwards.

In chapter 4 I will try to explain the Norwegian policy by applying Moravcsik’s theory. I will investigate to what degree the Norwegian policy can be explained by rational utility calculations. In the first part I will look at how the Norwegian scepticism was explained with reference to the ‘national interest’. In the second part, I will examine the Norwegian anti-marginalisation strategy. Was the focus on side-arenas a way of protecting the national interests? In the third part I will study the domestic actors and their fear of another EU debate. Can actors’ self interest help us to understand the Norwegian policy?

In chapter 5 I will try to explain the Norwegian policy by applying the social constructivist perspective of Katzenstein and Risse. The chapter has two parts. In the first part I discuss the Norwegian ‘foreign policy identity’ and its impact on Norwegian policy. In the second part I study how we can explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation by studying the foreign policy identity.

In chapter 6 I will conclude – both empirically and theoretically. First, I will look at what has been discovered empirically and what has characterised the Norwegian policy vis-à-vis the ESDP. I will then see how well the theories have explained the Norwegian policy.

2 THEORY AND METHOD

‘Values, loyalties, shared identities are (...) the most difficult phenomena for social scientists to study. Economists prefer to exclude them altogether. (...) Political scientists and sociologists cannot take this conveniently reductionist way out’
*William Wallace*³

In this chapter I will outline the main features of the theoretical framework. On this basis I will develop several hypotheses on how Norwegian EU policy can be explained. In the last part of the chapter, I will discuss research design and the use of sources.

Norwegian policy towards EU defence cooperation can be interpreted in two main ways: One might argue that Norwegian responses were result of a clear strategy, in order to pursue the country’s interests. An alternative view is that Norwegian policy was far less strategic; that it was rather a result of norms, culture and self-conception.

The two interpretations link directly to an ongoing theoretical discussion within international relations. How can we explain actors’ behaviour? Are the actors generally behaving in a strategic way, pursuing their self-interests? Or are actors much less rational, rather acting according to social norms and what seems to be appropriate? The first perspective is the one of rational choice, the second one of social constructivism. These are broad categories, which neither can be said to represent a substantive theory (Jupille et al. 2002). In the following I will discuss the two approaches, and further elaborate a theoretical framework for the dissertation.

The rational choice approach is based on ‘logic of consequences’ (March and Olsen 1989). An underlying assumption is that people operate with a set of fixed preferences, and act in order to protect these. ‘Rational choice is instrumental: it is guided by the outcome of action. Actions are valued and chosen not for themselves, but as more or less efficient means to a further end’ (Elster

³ Wallace 1990:16.

quoted in Risse 2000:3). Such approaches are numerous and come in several different variations⁴. What they all have in common is an insistence that ‘political behaviour can and should be studied as individual, strategically calculated, utility maximising actions’ (Eriksen and Weigård 1997:220).

Social constructivism is critical to such assumptions, which will be further discussed below. At this point it is interesting to notice a similar dichotomy within studies of the EU, between intergovernmentalists and institutionalists. Within the intergovernmental literature, states are seen as rational and strategic actors following their fixed preferences. The member states remain in control, and EU institutions are ‘little more than mechanisms for reducing transaction costs in future decision situations’ (Egeberg 2001:729). This is countered by institutionalists who argue that institutions matter, and that they quite strongly influence the way the member states behave.

2.1 Rationalist approaches and Moravcsik

One of the most elaborated theories on the former perspective can be found in Andres Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism (LI). Moravcsik argues that ‘European integration can best be explained as a series of rational choices made by national leaders’ (1998:18)⁵.

He makes several assumptions about interstate negotiations: First, negotiations take place within a non-coercive system of unanimous voting in which governments can and will reject agreements that would leave them worse off than unilateral policies; second, that the transaction costs of generating information and ideas are low relative to the benefits of interstate cooperation; and third, that the distribution of benefits reflects relative bargaining power.

⁴ For instance rational action theory, public choice, social choice and game theory.

⁵ Moravcsik’s theory is a rejection of claims made by neofunctionalists and supranationalists. The former argue that integration in one sector automatically begets further integration in other sectors, and that the integration process inevitably has to continue. (Lindberg 1963; Haas 1958). Supranationalists argue that innovative supranational actors have information superiority and therefore are essential to move the integration process forward (Sandholtz and Zysman 1989. See also Tranholm-Mikkelsen 1991). Both these claims are rejected by Moravcsik (1991, 1998).

On this background states negotiate as unitary actors with fixed preferences. Moravcsik’s theory has a weaker assumption of rationality than traditional rational choice theory. He assumes that states only act ‘as if’ they are unitary actors.

‘The assumption that unitary states are *rational* maintains that governments make internal decisions “as if” they were efficiently pursuing a weighted, stable set of underlying preferences given a constrained choice of means. Again, this assumption should not be taken too far. It is a weak rationality assumption. (...) Rather, the rationality assumption maintains only that within each negotiation, domestic political systems generate a set of stable, weighted objectives concerning particular “states of the world”, which governments pursue with the maximum efficiency affordable by available political means’ (Moravcsik 1998:23).

His theory has hence much in common with Putnam’s ‘two level games’, not regarding the state as a completely unitary actor (Putnam 1988). State preferences are created through a struggle between domestic interest groups, which may vary over time. This way he tries to avoid ‘a temptation that bedevils scholars on international relations, namely to assume that state preferences are fixed’ (Moravcsik 1998:20). Instead, Moravcsik argues that state preferences reflect the objectives of those domestic groups which influence the state apparatus. They are assumed to be ‘stable within each position advanced on each issue by each country in each negotiation, but not necessarily across negotiations, issues, or countries’ (Moravcsik 1998:24). The theory hence opens for state interests to change.

Moravcsik’s assumptions can easily be transferred to the study of Norwegian policy towards EU defence cooperation. According to the LI perspective we would assume information to be easily accessible. The Norwegian actors would then have all the relevant information to understand developments in EU security policy cooperation. Accordingly, they would also have a clear overview of possible consequences to Norway.

The idea of states acting ‘as if’ they were unitary actors is important, as it invites us to study the domestic level in detail. I will not only be studying the governmental level. I will also look at different actors within the Norwegian

foreign policy elite. Accordingly, rationality is not only linked to a protection of national interests, but also to a protection of domestic actors’ self interests.

Based on the negotiations between the government and the domestic actors, we would expect the formulation of a national strategy. The preferred policy would emerge through a rational consideration of costs and benefits.

2.2 Social constructivism: Katzenstein and Risse

Approaches within the category of social constructivism are critical to several of the claims made by rational choice theories. ‘(C)onstructivism questions the materialism and methodological individualism upon which much contemporary scholarship, including much rational choice work, has been built’ (Jupille et al. 2002:5). People are not assumed to operate with a fixed set of preferences and to act strategically to obtain these. Instead people are seen to act according to identities and cultural environment, mainly doing what is expected of them. They act according to ‘logic of appropriateness’ (March and Olsen 1989). Historical institutionalism would point at traditions, creating ‘path dependencies’ for future decisions. Sociological institutionalism would argue that identity and culture create certain ways of thinking, strongly influencing actors’ choices.

Building on the latter perspective, Katzenstein formulates a theory of the ‘culture of national security’ (1996). This perspective is a clear challenge to realism⁶, and especially to the idea of rational actors.

‘State interests do not exist to be “discovered” by self-interested, rational actors. Interests are constructed through a process of social interaction. “Defining”, not “defending”, the national interest is what this book seeks to understand. (...) It argues that security interests are defined by actors who respond to cultural factors’ (Katzenstein 1996:2).

⁶ Katzenstein argues that his perspective is in opposition both to realism and neo-liberal institutionalism. Both realism and liberal institutionalism share ‘the assumption of unified state actors and a focus on an anarchical, systemic context of states’ (Katzenstein 1996:12).

A core assumption is exactly a rejection of external rationalism (Desh 1998:153). Instead of interests and rational calculations, core concepts are norms, identity and culture. The analytical perspective departs in two ways from dominant assumptions in national security studies.

‘First, we argue that the security environments in which states are embedded are in important part cultural and institutional, rather than just material. (...) Second, we argue that cultural environments affect not only the incentives for different kinds of state behaviour but also the basic character of states – what we call state “identity”’ (Jepperson et al. 1996:33).

In the analysis I will refer to this as ‘foreign policy identity’, ‘state identity’ or ‘the culture of national security’. Although these expressions underline different aspects of culture and identity, they are treated as part of the same phenomenon in this thesis. The underlying assumption is that changes in the international environment will be interpreted within the frames of the national organisational culture. Kier defines this as ‘a set of basic assumptions, values, norms, beliefs, and formal knowledge that shapes collective understandings’ (1996:202). These frames shape people’s perception, and affect what they notice and how they interpret it. While parts of reality are squeezed out, other parts are magnified (ibid).

This perspective is then well-suited to explain why national policies seem to be rather stable and hard to change. This is also some of the problem with it: As the perspective might explain why changes do not take place, it cannot account for changes in the national preferences. I will therefore include Thomas Risse’s perspectives elaborated in the same volume, underlining the role of social interaction and learning processes. This way the perspective becomes more dynamic, opening for the possibility that ‘collective identities might change over time’ (Risse 1996:371).

In later works he further develops this view, and suggests that the process in which identities and norms change is the one of arguing. ‘(S)ocial constructivism encompasses not only the logic of appropriateness but also what

we could call “logic of truth seeking or arguing” (Risse 2000:6). The main advantage in including this perspective, is exactly that ‘(i)nterests and identities are no longer fixed, but subject to interrogation and challenges, and thus, to change’ (Risse 2000:10).

In the analysis I will use a constructivist perspective that builds on Katzenstein’s ‘culture of national security’, but also includes the moderations suggested by Risse. Based on the prior discussion we can make several assumptions of the Norwegian foreign policy: We would assume changes at the EU level to be interpreted through cultural frames and not necessarily be fully understood. Accordingly, the consequences to Norwegian security and defence policy might not be fully understood either. We would assume the Norwegian foreign policy culture to be quite stable, but not static. Changes would come about through deliberation processes involving foreign policy actors.

2.3 From theory to the real world: Hypotheses

With the two theories discussed above, we are equipped with two different approaches to explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. Based on Moravcsik’s theory we would expect Norwegian politicians to have a clear idea of their interest, and to act in order to protect these. EU defence cooperation was regarded as being against the Norwegian interests, as this could weaken the transatlantic link. This would then explain the strong focus on NATO, in which Norway participated fully and traditionally had enjoyed a pivotal role. Such considerations would also explain why Norwegian actors expressed scepticism to the prospect of further defence cooperation within the EU.

A focus on side arenas as the OSCE and the Nordic Council could be understood as a way of compensating for the lack of influence within the EU. According to a rational perspective these would be signs that Norwegian actors were aware of the marginalisation threat, and acted to limit the negative consequences of this. The first hypothesis is that *the Norwegian responses were*

result of a deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation.

Within this perspective an underlying assumption is that Norwegian actors were well informed, and fully understood the challenges represented by EU defence cooperation. The focus on side-arenas and the scepticism to EU defence cooperation does not indicate a lack of understanding. It was rather a way of protecting the national interest.

If we take domestic actors’ self interests into account, we might find additional explanations for the Norwegian policy. Empirically, there are good reasons to concentrate on the wish to avoid another EU debate. Such an interest would strengthen actors’ sceptical attitude to EU defence cooperation, and make them further underline the importance of side arenas in European security and defence policy. A second hypothesis within this perspective is that *Norwegian actors deliberately underplayed issues that might lead to another EU-debate, including possible EU defence cooperation.*

According to the Katzenstein/Risse perspective, the picture is somewhat different. The key to understand Norwegian policy in the 1990s is an understanding of the Norwegian foreign policy identity. Historical experiences had influenced the way of thinking about Norway’s role in the world, and what the country’s foreign and security policy could and should be.

Such a perspective implies that actors were not necessarily well-informed at all times. The national culture would create certain frames, which would affect what is noticed and how it is interpreted. In this case the result could be an inaccurate, or even misleading, understanding of processes going on within the EU. The third hypothesis is exactly that *Norwegian actors did not grasp the challenge represented by the EU’s changing role.*

According to Katzenstein and Risse, we need to understand a country’s identity and self-conception to be able to explain its foreign policy. Within the Norwegian political establishment the idea of NATO as the main security

organisation was deeply embedded. A continued focus on NATO during the 1990s would then be reflecting the dominant culture within the Norwegian foreign policy elite. Whereas Norwegian actors felt close to their Anglo-American partners, the relationship to continental Europe was much less close. An important consequence was much less influence by continental ideas, and also a lack of knowledge of what EU cooperation consisted of. This way, the Norwegian foreign policy identity would explain both the continued focus on NATO, and also the sceptical views on EU defence cooperation. A fourth hypothesis is therefore that *a particular conception of Norway’s role in European, transatlantic and Nordic relations can best explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation.*

2.4 Research design

The dissertation is a case study based on a qualitative research design. The focus will primarily be on Norwegian actors and their relationship to EU defence cooperation. According to Yin, a case study is ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin 1994:13). He regards the case study as an intensive study with emphasis on actor-perspectives and context and with relatively few data points compared to the number of variables⁷. The case study is especially well-suited as I will study Norwegian actors over a relatively long period of time.

The purpose of the thesis is twofold; to answer the questions *what* and *why* – in other words to *describe* and to *explain*. These aspects are closely interlinked: ‘We cannot construct meaningful causal explanations without good description; description, in turn, loses most of its interests unless linked to some causal

⁷ Generally speaking a case study has a lot more variables than data points, although it does not have to be only *one* case as Hellevik argues (2002:97). Indeed, comparative case studies with at least two cases are not unusual (Andersen 1997). In these studies, one often compares cases which are very similar, but with some important differences (or the other way around). The purpose is to ‘control’ as many variables as possible to be able to argue that these variables cannot explain the observed variation. This way, the case study is used as a quasi-experiment. To use the case study as a kind of experiment is one of the main advantages with the method, according to Yin.

relationship’ (King et al. 1994:35). The main challenge related to describing is to gather reliable and valid data. The main challenge related to explaining is to couple the independent and the dependent variable. This will be further discussed below.

In the entire thesis I try to stick to a principle of transparency. Two aspects should be underlined in this respect. First, I want to name the interview sources as far as possible. One main advantage is that it makes it easier for the reader to independently evaluate the information given. Second, I present much of the material as original quotations. Again, this makes it easier for the reader to draw his or her own conclusions, which might be different than the author’s. This is especially important in a qualitative case study, where my own understanding and evaluation of the sources are crucial for the conclusion drawn. Much of my primary sources are translated, as they originally are in Norwegian. As some nuances might be lost in the translation, I also choose to reprint some key parts in the footnotes.

The challenge of describing

In the thesis I deal with Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation, and an important task will be to describe these responses. Although a completely objective description might be an impossibility one should at least aim for this as an ideal. The use of different sources is important in this context, as this will make the findings and conclusions much more convincing and accurate (Yin 1994:92). It will hence improve both the reliability and validity of the study⁸.

To give an accurate description of the Norwegian policy in the 1990s, it is necessary to have a broad understanding of the historical background on which this policy is based. I will therefore start by giving a broad description of

⁸ I will not go into the philosophical debate on whether or not it is possible to give an objective description of reality. I only note that there are diverging views on this. ‘Obviously, reliability and validity are problematic for researchers who do not share the assumption that there exists a single and objective reality, and who instead view reality as a social construction’ (Rieker 2003b:31).

Norwegian history, with a specific focus on Norwegian security policy and Norwegian policy towards the European Communities. Within the limits of a dissertation it is impossible to go deep enough into the material to do it justice. The purpose is only to give a brief outline of developments in the Norwegian history, which are important to understand Norwegian foreign policy from 1990 onwards. Chapter 3 will almost exclusively be based on secondary sources, mainly books on Norwegian and European history.

Moving on to the analysis in chapters 4 and 5, such an approach is insufficient. My method will be a textual analysis of different written sources; both primary and secondary. To a large degree I will examine official documents to find evidence of change in the Norwegian policy. I will make use of primary sources as governmental reports, white papers and official speeches/articles. I am interested in their content, and will therefore evaluate their relevance and accuracy⁹. To make use of the sources this way, they should ideally be cognitive and describing past events (Dahl 2002:40).

Dahl's categorisation of primary sources is useful as it focuses on the nature of primary material, which in turn has consequences for a researcher's use of these. In the thesis I will make use of several kinds of sources, some of which do not fulfil Dahl's requirements. Some sources are programmatic, reflecting parties' and governments' views on how developments should be understood and evaluated; they might also give normative evaluations of developments. An obvious example is party programmes. We cannot expect empirical statements in party programmes to be neutral. They are, however, interesting in order to study how actors evaluated developments from an ideological point of view. Accordingly, I use them to describe the parties' political positions.

Other sources might completely fulfil Dahl's requirements of being cognitive and describing past events, but they are not necessarily unproblematic as

⁹ The alternative would be to treat them as evidence that there exists written material on the topic, but without looking at the actual content. This is what Dahl describes as the difference between remains (levning) and reports (beretning).

sources. Governmental papers can for instance be influenced by the government’s wish to avoid focus on certain aspects of its policy. Speeches can be strongly influenced by recent developments and discussions, and might therefore be less useful in describing general long-term trends. I try to deal with this the following ways: First, the main focus is on official documents, which usually are less influenced by day-to-day developments than speeches and statements in media. Second, I have not only looked at documents and speeches, but also at policy. What actors do is usually more interesting than what they say. This way it is also possible to find inconsistencies between rhetoric and action. Third, I study developments over time. This way we get a clearer idea of what are general and lasting tendencies. Fourth, I will use a method of triangulation of sources. In addition to primary sources, I will use secondary sources as books, scientific papers, newspapers and magazines. This is important to avoid reproducing the official version of policy. In addition to written sources, I also choose to use interviews. This raises quite specific challenges, which will be discussed in the following.

Interviews are important of two main reasons. First, they supplement written material, which does not cover all topics of interest. Second, they are helpful to get a clearer idea of what is written ‘between the lines’. Through interviews it is possible to understand the different interpretations of the evidence, and also detect different opinions on official policy. The interviews will hence be important to further improve the validity and reliability. I have used an open interview technique, with only some main questions prepared in advance. The advantage of such a method is that it is possible to improvise during the interview, but still keep focus on the actual case (Rubin and Rubin 1995).

As I interviewed actors some time after events took place, there were occasionally problems of remembering. This was quite as expected, as I study a small part of the Norwegian security and defence policy, and as the period studied goes back ten years in time. Some sources had problems to remember all aspects

of developments, but most of this information could easily be found through other sources. I will therefore argue that the problem was rather limited. There is also an important advantage in interviewing actors some years after events took place. As some of the topics were quite controversial at the time, the actors will generally speak much more freely after a period of time. Especially will actors who are retired, or out of politics, usually be willing to speak much more freely than actors who still hold their positions.

This tendency is especially relevant in this study, as I wish to name my interview sources as far as possible. As mentioned, I try to stick to a principle of transparency. In this respect, there are two main reasons why sources should be named. First, the actors’ views are to a large extent already official and well known. Norway’s relationship to EU defence cooperation was an important topic in the political debates post-1994, and the actors’ views can to a large degree be found in media archives. Second, and more important, there is a danger in allowing anonymous sources to give their description of reality. The sources may have their own agendas, and without knowing who these sources are it will be impossible for readers to evaluate their information (Brurås 2000:123). This principle is, however, impossible to stick to in all cases. Interviews with bureaucrats will have to be anonymous, as their opinions might be different than the ones of the political leadership. Officially, bureaucrats will have to stick to the official explanations, which not necessarily are the most accurate. In these cases anonymity is necessary to improve reliability.

Finally, I want to underline that I have made similar agreements with all my interview sources. I have explicitly stated that all information a priori is confidential. When I later decided what information and what quotes to use the sources were contacted to give their acceptance. This way, they could to a large degree control the way they are used in this thesis. At the same time there are two advantages with this: First, they are able to speak quite freely during the interview. Second, misunderstandings that might have occurred can be corrected.

The challenge of explaining

There are three main ideas on how a good explanation should be. According to a covering law perspective, we should aim to find laws explaining human behaviour. The other extreme is a hermeneutic perspective, only interested in understanding human behaviour. The problem with the former is its deterministic approach, which gives little room for people to choose their own actions. By contrast, the hermeneutic perspective rejects any idea of laws in social sciences. A perspective between these two is Jon Elster’s perspective on mechanisms. He argues that a social phenomenon can be explained by identifying mechanisms, which is far less deterministic than the covering law model. In this study, the aim is by no means to find laws explaining Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. The question of *why* will be answered by identifying mechanisms to explain the Norwegian policy. Self interests and identity can be seen as two different mechanisms explaining the Norwegian policy. They are my two independent variables, which are connected to the dependent variable through my hypotheses.

By looking at the empirical evidence, I will try to investigate to what degree the Norwegian responses were result of a deliberate strategy and to what degree culture and identity can explain the Norwegian policy. Indicators of the former will be arguments highlighting costs and benefits, in order to explain the Norwegian policy. Indicators of the latter might be expressions of Norway’s role in transatlantic relations, and historical and cultural ties to partners and allies. An investigation of this might be especially difficult in the area of security and defence policy. This is an area in which policies are often described in terms of national interests and strategies. There is, in other words, a danger in interpreting Norwegian policies as rational strategies although the reality might have been different. I will deal with these challenges in three main ways: First, the use of sources triangulation is important in this respect as well. As official documents and speeches might have too much focus on rationality, the use of newspapers and

scientific reports can give a more nuanced picture. Second, I will use the interview situation to ask specific questions regarding culture and identity. This is important as such topics are seldom presented in official documents. Third, I will focus on policy to see whether the actors were as rational as they might argue themselves. Are people doing what they say they do?

It is important to notice that although Moravcsik's theory emphasises quite different aspects than the one of Katzenstein/Risse, the theories are not mutually exclusive. If I find that Norwegian actors tried to pursue a rational strategy, this does not necessarily imply that culture and identity did not play a role. Although actors might have found it rational to avoid focusing on EU related issues, this does not imply that they grasped the challenge represented by EU defence cooperation. The two theoretical approaches combined might be necessary to fully explain the Norwegian policy. Their relevance might have varied in the different periods of time. It might well be that actors were very focused on EU defence cooperation as a challenge in the immediate aftermath of the EU referendum, but that they later might have underestimated the challenge. What might have been quite rational policies in one period might have been less so at a later stage. It might also be that some actors were more influenced by culture and norms than others.

Lastly, there is the question of generalisation of the results (external validity). The study is concerned with how actors on the national level are responding to the challenge from above (EU policies). This is a phenomenon taking place in all European countries, and is not limited to Norway as such. The Norwegian position is, however, quite special. The Norwegian population has refused to join the union in two referendums, but the country is still closely involved in EU politics (e.g. through the EEA and the Schengen agreement). This situation is important to explain Norwegian actors' responses. Seen in this light, one has to be very careful with generalisation of the results.

Results can be generalised both in space and in time. Regarding the latter, it is clear that the focus primarily is on the developments from the early 1990s onwards. This period was special due to the pace in which changes took place. It was also a quite special situation with international organisations muddling through after the end of the Cold War. Both NATO and the EU were moving fast but not necessarily knowing where. This is not to argue that any generalisation in time is impossible, but the special circumstances these years are aspects one has to consider in this respect.

3 HISTORY

‘Of all the organisations currently existing in the world,
the Western European Union must be one of those whose length of existence
is most inversely proportional to the actual functions that it has fulfilled’
*Philip H. Gordon*¹⁰

Writing about Norway’s relationship to international organisations Tamnes finds that Norway has traditionally wished to ‘join without joining, or vice versa’ (1997:207). Lundestad argues much the same, finding Norway a strong supporter of international cooperation – in principle. In practice, however, the conclusion was usually that Norway was unable to participate, or at least needed opt-outs (Lundestad 1985:41, quoted in Eriksen and Pharo 1997:17).

As we shall see, this is a quite typical feature of Norwegian foreign policy, perhaps especially relevant to Norwegian policy towards the EC¹¹. The Norwegian population has generally been quite reluctant to the idea of giving up sovereignty since the independence of 1905. The memories of being ruled by Sweden and Denmark might have created a feeling that sovereignty must never again be lost. This is certainly connected to a feeling of national identity, and emotions are therefore strong. In both EC referendums supporters and opponents of Norwegian EEC/EU-membership felt they took part in something extremely important. The question represented something existential, affecting their entire identity (Alnæs 2000:232-233).

Some knowledge of Norwegian foreign policy history is essential to understand the Norwegian policy from 1990 onwards. In this chapter I will concentrate on two aspects: First, I will show that ‘the question of Europe’¹² was an extremely controversial issue in the entire post-war era. Second, I will show why the relationship to Britain and the USA became a fundamental in the

¹⁰ Gordon 1997:103.

¹¹ The European Community, as it is referred to, is in reality several communities. It started out with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and was followed by the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). They were merged into a single community with the Merger Treaty of 1965. In 1993, the EC became the EU.

¹² The expression used by Gowan and Anderson 1997.

Norwegian security and defence policy. I will argue that the decisions to join NATO and stay outside the EC were landmark decisions in Norwegian history. Both decisions were, however, challenged by developments in the early 1990s. These developments reopened difficult debates on Norway’s position in Europe and in the transatlantic relationship. The Defence Minister found the strategic choices of direction to be ‘at least as profound as those we made in 1948/49’ (Holst 1992). First, the controversial discussions on Norway’s relationship to continental Europe reoccurred, as the EU opened for a new round of enlargement. Second, EU plans for closer defence cooperation threatened to make NATO less important, which in turn threatened to marginalise Norway.

3.1 Norwegian independence by coincidence?

Norway’s status has been closely connected to international politics, and one is therefore bound to look outside Norway’s borders to understand the country’s history. Looking back the last 700 years, Norwegian independence has been the exception rather than the rule. Norwegian attempts to describe its period under Danish rule as a ‘night lasting 400 years’ is therefore grossly misleading. The developments were to a large degree outside the control of Norwegians. When the country was transferred from Denmark to Sweden in 1814, the main reason was that Denmark chose the losing side during the Napoleonic war. Norwegian actors’ interests were of less importance (Pryser 1996:234).

When Norway finally gained independence in 1905, this was largely due to the interests of the great powers in the region, combined with historical coincidences: There was certainly a controversy between Sweden and Norway, over the latter’s right to have an independent foreign policy, but it is doubtful that this conflict inevitably would have led to a complete separation of the two states. The international situation at the time made this possible. In Palmer and Colton’s ‘History of the Modern World’ Norway’s independence is not mentioned at all. The reason is probably that this was no major event in world history. And it was

especially not a major event in 1905, as the great powers’ attention was focusing on other parts of the world. The first Morocco crisis emerged, one of the incidents leading to the First World War. The same year the Russo-Japanese war ended, in turn producing the Russian Revolution of 1905 (Palmer and Colton 1995:682). The great powers hence had a common interest in avoiding new international conflicts to emerge. When Norway pushed for independence from Sweden, this was acceptable as long as it happened quickly and peacefully. In addition, Britain had a special interest in dividing the Nordic countries, and hence put some pressure on Sweden for this to happen (Kaartvedt 1995:335, Berg 1995:25).

After 1905 Norwegian policy-makers wanted to secure the independence, and they assumed that neutrality was the best way to achieve this goal. As an independent foreign policy had been one of the reasons why Norwegian independence was gained, it is rather paradoxical that the government worked to have ‘a foreign ministry without a foreign policy’¹³. There was broad consensus on this policy, which was quite typical to smaller states in this period. Neutrality was generally regarded a good way of guaranteeing a state’s independence when it was too weak to do so by power (Berg 1995:54). This was hence a way of trying to opt out of European power politics.

Simultaneously it was realised that such an opt-out had its limits, and Norwegian actors therefore tried to obtain a close relationship to Great Britain. The royal family was used as an instrument for this policy. By making the Danish prince Carl the Norwegian king, his wife Maud became Norwegian queen. Maud was the daughter of Britain’s king Edward VII, and the idea was to obtain a British guarantee for Norwegian independence. The Norwegian Prime Minister Gunnar Knudsen put it quite bluntly in 1908, during a British state visit in Oslo:

‘We trust (...) that there never will be trouble, and if there is, that we shall not be the cause of bringing you into it. But if the possible comes to pass, we shall place our

¹³ As Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson has described it (Berg 1995:53).

trust in the British nation, mindful of the new link forged by our Queen' (quoted in Berg 1995:96).

What has been described as 'the British guarantee' became an important fundamental of Norwegian foreign policy, and is also reflected during the First World War. Norway did not officially support any of the fighting parties, but sympathized with Great Britain and France (Furre 1996:50). This has led the historian Olav Riste to describe Norway as 'the neutral ally' (1965). Norway was able to stay outside the First World War, and the policy of neutrality continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The Second World War showed the limits of this policy.

3.2 Norway and the Second World War

The event that fundamentally changed Norwegian policy was the German invasion April 9th 1940. Although neutrality had kept the country outside the First World War, it was not sufficient this time. It is well documented that the invasion came as a complete shock to Norwegian politicians, and that German forces had few problems invading the country¹⁴. The Norwegian government fled the capital, and resisted cooperation with the invading power. When German forces were about to seize control over the last parts of Norway, the government left the country. This happened 7th of June 1940, on the anniversary for Norway's independence.

The political elite went to Stockholm and to London, and in both capitals large Norwegian communities emerged. The government was situated in the British capital during the war, something that had clear consequences for the government's foreign policy thinking. Especially after the change of Foreign Minister, the government's security policy was fundamentally renewed. With Mr.

¹⁴ Some historians even argue that the German invasion would have been less likely if the union with Sweden still had remained. The national defence would then have been much stronger. 'På længere sigt blev unionsopløsningen en national ulykke for Norge. Prisen måtte betales den 9. april 1940. (...) Så risikabel som Operation Weserübung var, er det usandsynligt, at et felttog mod Norge og Danmark var blevet indledt, hvis den norsk-svenske union ikke var blevet opløst' (Bjøl 2000:293).

Halvdan Koht's resignation in November 1940, 'the government demonstrated its break with its neutral past'. (Riste 1973:67). Mr. Trygve Lie had a completely different idea of the Norwegian policy than his predecessor. He believed the German invasion proved that neutrality never could guarantee security. According to the Foreign Minister, the best solution would be organised cooperation with the UK and the USA (Sverdrup 1996:90). At this point, the Norwegian government worked to gain support for such an Atlantic Alliance, but did not succeed achieving British or American commitments.

Although the government had made a fundamental change of policy, the consequences were still quite moderate. There were two important reasons for this: First, the government's wishes for Atlantic cooperation totally depended on Britain and the USA. Second, there was the question of legitimacy. The government lived a quite isolated life during the war, with limited contact with the homeland. A Norwegian society had also evolved in Stockholm, which geographically was much closer to the Norwegian population. This group had quite different ideas on how Norwegian foreign policy should be after the war. After the war ended in 1945, the official policy was much less renewed than Mr. Lie had indicated. It seemed that the government followed Mr. Halvdan Koht's advice from 1940: To keep some distance to the UK to obtain a good relationship with the Soviet Union (Sverdrup 1996:183). This was to change during the latter half of the 1940s, as the international situation changed for the worse.

At the end of the 1940s, it became evident that cooperation between the USA and the Soviet Union had been based on one interest only: the German enemy. With an occupied and defeated Germany, the basis for cooperation disappeared. Simultaneously, the idea of the United Nations as a security organisation vanished, as the relationship between the USA and the Soviet Union grew steadily cooler. The division of Europe became cemented, and the Americans saw the need for closer cooperation with the West European allies. A

fundamental step was taken with the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949.

The Norwegian government had pursued the idea of an Atlantic alliance during the war, but without getting British or American guarantees at the time. When the plan actually materialised, Norway was far more sceptical. There was a fear of the Soviet response to such a membership, and there was also the question of a Scandinavian military alliance. Among many Norwegian politicians there was strong sympathy for a military alliance with the other Scandinavian countries. This way, it was argued, one could counter the trend towards a division of Europe. It was also believed that Norwegian membership in such an alliance would be more acceptable to the Soviet Union than a NATO-membership.

But attempts to create a Scandinavian alliance collapsed, and the main reason was the different experiences during the war (Sverdrup 1996:327). Sweden had managed to stay neutral during the war and wanted the alliance to be independent of other alliances. This would in practice mean an extended neutrality zone. This was unacceptable to Norway, whose experience during the war had showed the limits of neutrality. In case of a Soviet attack there was need for American help, which had to be planned in advance. With the collapse of the Scandinavian alliance talks, Norway chose to join the Atlantic alliance in April 1949. Generally, the war had led Norwegian policy much closer to American and British policy. Before 1940, there had been extensive Norwegian-German contacts on the economical, cultural, scientific and political level. After the war, most of this contact ended, and continental impulses decreased significantly (Eriksen and Pharo 1997:140).

3.3 Norway, NATO and the European Communities

The NATO-membership became a fundamental – maybe *the* fundamental – in Norwegian security and defence policy. Norwegian politicians regarded the Soviet Union as the main threat, and the Norwegian defence was organised according to

this. The focus was almost exclusively on territorial defence, and how the country could be defended if the Soviet Union attacked. Most of Norwegian military activity was hence located in the northern part of the country, close to the Soviet border. Prepared American military assistance was one of the main reasons why plans for a Scandinavian alliance collapsed. With the NATO membership allied military equipment was stored in different parts of Norway. It was realised that the Norwegian army could not stand up against the Red Army alone, and the strategy was hence to limit and slow down a Soviet attack until allied help could be deployed.

To the other NATO-partners, Norway was seen as a rather important ally due to the geopolitical position. The country was located right below the direct route from the North American continent to the western parts of the Soviet Union. Being a neighbour to the USSR Norway could also provide important military intelligence. From the early 1950s until the end of the Cold War, Norwegian defence policy was remarkably stable. There was a broad consensus on this policy, both among the politicians and in the population. There were certainly groupings critical to the Norwegian NATO membership, but a withdrawal from the alliance was never a real possibility. Within NATO, the Norwegian policy changes were only minor, and never challenged the fundamentals of Norwegian security and defence policy (Gude, quoted in Borgersen 1998:33).

Within NATO, Norway's closest allies were the UK and the USA. The relationship to other NATO countries was not that close, and to the two biggest European NATO countries the relationship was not close at all. France withdrew from NATO's military structures in 1966, and the relationship to Germany still remained problematic. Norway had only reluctantly accepted that The Federal Republic became a NATO-member in 1955. Although a strong and rearmed West Germany was necessary to strengthen NATO, there was a deep scepticism in Norway. There were strong anti-German feelings both in the population and within the political elite. Throughout the Cold War, there were several

controversies between Germany and Norway within the alliance. Examples are the question of German NATO-officers in Norway, German participation in Norwegian NATO-exercises and the question of German nuclear weapons.

Whereas Norwegian actors generally wanted a close relationship to the UK and the USA, their attitude towards continental Europe was far more reserved. In the early post-war years the Norwegian 'Europe policy' was very restrictive. As a receiver of Marshall Aid, Norway was obliged to participate in the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). The organisation put restrictions on the economic policy, and promoted the American policy of trade liberalisation. There was a conflict between these ideals and the Norwegian plan economy, but membership was acceptable to the Norwegian government due to the organisation's intergovernmental character. The Anglo-Scandinavian alliance could effectively stop any initiatives for supranationalism (Eriksen and Pharo 1997:127-128).

Similarly, Norwegian and British policy overlapped in the case of the Council of Europe. Both countries promoted a restrictive line, and were sceptical to signs of supranationalism. Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries had even established a Cooperation Committee (UNISCAN) in 1949, as a counterweight to continental integration attempts. This constellation became useful when the continental states created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in 1957. The former was the most important, creating a custom's union and a common agricultural policy (CAP). Britain refused to join the EEC, and participated instead in the creation of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). The member states kept their different tariffs, and contrary to the EEC, EFTA remained an intergovernmental organisation.

Norway became a member of EFTA from the start in 1960. An important reason was the relationship to Great Britain, which was Norway's most important trading partner. Hence, Norwegian EFTA membership was not a controversial

issue at the time (Furre 1996:322). To Norwegian politicians, this relative calm came to a sudden end when Britain chose to apply for membership in the EC in 1961, with Denmark following suit. Britain had been sceptical to the EEC from the very beginning, and had also tried to dissolve the EC into a wider free trade area. Britain was especially concerned with the supranational tendencies in the EC, and preferred a purely intergovernmental structure. When the country still decided to apply for membership this was largely due to economic considerations. The prime minister advocated membership for negative rather than positive reasons (Dinan 1999:50).

The British decision made ‘the question of Europe’ the dominant one in the Norwegian debate. Some argued that Norway had chosen Western cooperation with the NATO-membership, and that membership in the EEC would be a natural continuation. With both Britain and Denmark applying, it was argued that Norway should follow her neighbours and allies. But British scepticism was reflected in the Norwegian debate. The EC being a supranational organisation was especially sensitive, and some argued that a membership would limit sovereignty and hence violate the constitution. They also argued that the common agricultural policy (CAP) seriously would damage Norwegian farmers.

To the political parties, the question was a difficult one. The governing Labour party was divided, as were the Liberal Party and the Christian People’s Party. The Conservative Party was clearly in favour, while the Centre Party was just as clearly against. This is a constellation we will recognise in later debates on the EC. In 1962 a large majority in the parliament still decided to start negotiations with the EC, and it was decided that a final decision on membership had to be taken by referendum. This way, nation-wide campaigns were initiated both by the supporters and opponents of Norwegian EC membership. The first nation-wide EC-debate experienced a sudden end, due to the French president Charles de Gaulle. France vetoed British membership in 1963 (and once more in 1967), and the Danish and Norwegian applications were also put on hold. In Norwegian

politics, attention now shifted to national issues, although the conflict level did not decrease. The EC debate had fundamentally shaken the calm and consensus in Norwegian politics, and in 1963 Labour lost its position as a governmental party – for the first time since the Second World War.

At the Hague summit, the EC was once again ready to move forward. The catchphrase was ‘completion, deepening and enlargement’. Completion meant finalising the financing of the CAP, deepening indicated plans for foreign policy cooperation and closer cooperation on several other policy areas. Only with such strengthening of the Community, the French president Georges Pompidou was willing to let the British join (Dinan 1999:61-63).

In Norway, the debate on membership reoccurred, and was much more intense than earlier. The case was especially difficult to the four-party government, consisting of the Centre Party (eurosceptic), the Conservative Party (in favour of membership), the Christian People’s Party and the Liberal Party (the two latter divided on the issue). The government resigned in 1970, and the Labour party formed a new government with Trygve Bratteli as Prime Minister. Although the Labour party was internally divided on the issue, the leadership strongly argued in favour of membership. The government even promised to resign, if the referendum had a negative outcome.

The question of EC membership divided not only most of the parties, but also the Norwegian population. The historian Berge Furre argues that the question represented much more than only the EC question itself. It was a broad fight on the country’s development and social values, and was hence the toughest political struggle since the war (Furre 1996:340). The eurosceptics argued that it concerned the idea of Norway as a sovereign state, democratic values and a rejection of economic liberalism and capitalism in general. These groups argued that a membership would ruin Norwegian farming and fishing industries, and that the traditional Norwegian way of living would be in danger. Pro-EC groups also played on people’s feelings, arguing that the EC was the guarantee for a peaceful

and prosperous Europe. Norwegian membership would tie the country firmly to the Western sphere, to our closest allies and economic trading partners.

It is no exaggeration to say that the EC question raised very strong feelings, and that it represents a category of its own in the Norwegian political debate. As arguments were based on feelings as much as facts the debate often led to deep controversies between the participants. The wounds went deep, and the question of Europe had far wider consequences than the negative outcome of the 1972 referendum. With such a result the government resigned as promised, and during next year's election the political landscape changed completely. The changes went further than in any other election after the Second World War (Furre 1996:346).

3.4 NATO in the 1990s: From territorial defence to global power

I have argued that the decisions to join NATO and to stay outside the EC were landmark decisions. In the early 1990s both decisions were challenged. With the end of the Cold War, the Warsaw Pact vanished as the main NATO adversary. It was unclear what the future role of NATO should be, and if the organisation would survive at all. Lord Ismay's description of NATO's purpose is well known: To keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down (Hyde-Price 2000:155). The only purpose that still seemed relevant was the one of keeping American presence in Europe. Throughout the 1990s, however, NATO reinvented its entire *raison d'être*, as the alliance gradually reformed itself and took on new tasks. Many of the changes came as direct responses to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

The Atlantic Alliance had been constructed to fight a war against the Soviet Union on European soil, and military forces were assigned to protect different parts of the NATO area. The Alliance's primary task was defined in its Article 5, regarding collective defence. In the early 1990s, NATO took several steps to deal with the changed environment following the end of the Cold War. The strategic concept was changed, and immediate reaction forces (IRF) were created in order

to increase flexibility. Particularly through its experiences in the Yugoslav conflict, the Atlantic alliance was transformed to deal with operations out of area.

Initially, the EU tried to handle the Yugoslav conflict without US and NATO involvement, and the Americans seemed to be satisfied with this¹⁵. But EU efforts revealed serious shortcomings of a common foreign and security policy. First and foremost, the EU lacked a credible stick in their negotiations with the fighting parties. NATO represented exactly such a stick, and the alliance (and the USA) became increasingly involved in the conflict. In 1992 NATO started a naval operation in the Adriatic ocean, to surveillance the arms embargo of Yugoslavia. This was an important landmark in NATO’s history, as it was the first operation out-of-area (Mevik 1999:76). In 1993, the alliance started operation ‘Deny Flight’ to oversee the No Fly Zone over Bosnia Herzegovina. When the Dayton peace accords were signed in 1995, NATO participated with an Implementation Force (IFOR), which was replaced by a Stabilisation Force (SFOR) the next year. When war later broke out between Serbia and Kosovo, NATO responded by launching air strikes against Serb forces in the spring 1999. Again, these attacks were followed by a peace agreement and deployment of NATO forces (KFOR).

Whereas the Yugoslav conflict had taken NATO out of area, more was to come. After the terrorist attacks 11th September 2001, NATO took several steps to meet the new threats of terrorism. The military command structure was changed once more to make the alliance more flexible. At the Prague summit in 2002, the alliance established a NATO Response Force (NRF) – a reaction force that can be deployed all over the world. Today, the alliance has a global role, leading the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and assisting the Polish-led division in Iraq.

¹⁵ The Council president Jacques Poos from Luxembourg raised the stakes by stating that this was ‘the hour of Europe, not the hour of the Americans (...). If one problem can be solved by the Europeans, it’s the Yugoslav problem’ (Quoted in Nuttall 2000:200). The Americans seemed to be happy with the Europeans taking the lead. Secretary of State James Baker argued that the American people would not have supported US involvement, ‘after all, the United States had fought three wars in this century in Europe – two hot ones and one cold one. And three was quite enough’ (quoted in Danner 1997:63).

The brief description of NATO developments after the Cold War should demonstrate two important points. First, the Alliance changed fundamentally from the early 1990s. NATO has traditionally been designed to fight a war in Western Europe, on the member states’ soil. This implied that soldiers and military equipment to a large degree were deployed beforehand, and with the acceptance and assistance of the hosting state. It is a quite different operation to deploy soldiers and equipment in a state outside Europe, in which the deployment might not be assisted nor accepted.

Second, and as a consequence of the first, NATO started to put quite different demands on the member countries. To participate in an operation like Afghanistan, there is a need for flexible forces which can be rapidly deployed. There is a need for an increased transport capability in terms of strategic airlift. Bunkers and fortresses in the member countries have lost the relevance they once had. The development out-of-area hence represented a huge challenge to NATO countries. This is true for Norway as well, whose pivotal position within NATO was based on the threat from the Soviet Union.

From 1989 onwards, Norwegian policy makers tried to deal with the changed environment and the new demands from NATO. Norway participated in NATO’s new flexible reaction forces, and among Norwegian actors there seemed to be a broad consensus to fulfil NATO obligations. Characteristically, the decision to establish a Norwegian IRF-force (the Telemark battalion) was taken almost without any debate. This reflected the Norwegian dependence on NATO (Borgersen 2000). Despite such changes, the focus was almost exclusively on territorial defence, and Norwegian actors were to a large extent stuck within a Cold War paradigm. ‘Norwegian authorities tried to get an acceptance of the special problems in the north. At times, this became a rather lonely battle. The allies did not lose their interest in Norway, but it decreased and took on new forms’ (Tamnes 1997:139). Within NATO, Norway was seen as a conservative country which was not too eager to see changes in the alliance. ‘In the early 1990s,

many of Norway’s closest allies redefined their military structure. Norway stuck to the conclusion of the DC’90, despite decreased allied engagement in Norway, which made this harder and more expensive. (...) Norway was increasingly seen as a country lacking flexibility and ability to adapt to a new security policy agenda’ (Sjursen 1999:54).

According to Flikke, a main problem was that international operations were seen as opposed to territorial defence. There was ‘an artificial division between “national” and “international”’ (2001:542). International operations were seen as an obligation in a UN context, and increasingly also in a NATO context. This came in addition to national defence, and was not seen as part of it. Instead, there was a widespread fear that international operations took away resources that should have been used on territorial defence. Only after 1998, the government started to regard international operations as a way of strengthening the defence of Norway. With White Paper 38 (1998-99) all existing forces were merged into a new international force consisting of some 3.500 personnel. These could be used in a UN, NATO or WEU/EU context (Flikke 2001:546).

The increased attention towards international operations still did not change the traditional focus on territorial defence. Instead, one tried to ride two horses simultaneously: increased participation in international operations abroad *and* an unchanged national defence at home. As a consequence the Norwegian defence ran into a deep and structural crisis. The size of the military forces was too large, and the defence was unable to meet future demands. There was a growing understanding that the situation could not continue. Two studies¹⁶ came to the same conclusion. They suggested a fundamental transformation of the Norwegian defence, towards a slimmer, more mobile and flexible defence (Godal 2003:54). In its proposal to parliament, the government underlined that ‘(t)he Norwegian defence is largely still organised to resist a great invasion of Norwegian territory,

¹⁶ Forsvarsstudie 2000 og Forsvarspolitisk utvalg.

which is no longer a probable threat’ (Government Proposal 45, 2000-2001)¹⁷. The government wanted to get rid of 5000 employees, and to make the defence more prepared for military operations abroad. Most of the governments’ suggestions were accepted by the parliament in June 2001.

3.5 The EU of the 1990s: a challenge to Norwegian foreign policy

We have seen how Norway tried to adapt to NATO’s changed role. Norwegian actors were largely preoccupied with developments within the Atlantic alliance, which was a cornerstone in Norway’s security and defence policy. They were far less concerned about the EU in this respect. In the early 1990s, the EU was not regarded a serious actor in European security and defence policy. However, changes within the union should increasingly represent a challenge to Norwegian security and defence policy. The EU countries gradually extended their foreign policy cooperation, and defence became part of this cooperation. With the Maastricht treaty it was explicitly stated that the CFSP should ‘include all questions related to the security of the union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence’. The instrument for this policy should be the Western European Union (WEU), which had been a rather insignificant organisation in post-war Europe.

The organisation had its origins in the Franco-British Dunkirk treaty of 1947¹⁸. After the establishment of NATO in 1949 the WEU lost some of its importance. But it became useful again some years later, due to the question of West German rearmament and possible NATO membership¹⁹. By making The

¹⁷ ‘Det norske forsvaret er i stor grad fortsatt organisert for å motstå en storstilt invasjon av norsk territorium, hvilket ikke lenger er en sannsynlig trussel. Denne organiseringen bidrar til at altfor store ressurser går med til å drifte en uforholdsmessig stor fredsorganisasjon. Dette går på bekostning av den operative evnen og mulighetene til å fornye styrkestrukturen’.

¹⁸ This treaty was modified with the Brussels Treaty of 1948, where the Benelux countries were included in the Western Union (WU). The creation of the WU was part of an attempt to make the USA involve in European security (Kaplan 1985:107).

¹⁹ The background was the Korean War. American military forces and equipment were moved from Europe to Korea. The Americans argued that rearmament of West Germany would be imperative to stand up

Federal Republic member of the WEU, limits could be imposed upon German rearmament and force numbers (Deighton 1997:17). This way, German membership of NATO became acceptable to France.

The WEU became a sleeping organisation where only the international Brussels Treaty remained. The WEU continued to exist because ‘it was a relatively inexpensive institution, and undoubtedly its death would have reopened painful debates about how defence issues fitted into the process of European integration’ (Forster 1997:29). This was naturally a convenient solution to Norway as well. NATO became the main forum for security policy discussions in Europe, and Norway participated fully. This convenient situation ended with the Maastricht Treaty. A potential military role for the EU was no less than a little revolution compared to the former reluctance to even discuss the issue. This was a long step away from the idea of ‘civilian power Europe’ (Duchêne 1973, see also Smith 1998:79 and Zielonka 1998:228).

At the early 1990s it might be right that the WEU’s length of existence was inversely proportional to the actual functions that it has fulfilled (Gordon 1997). This was about to change, and during the 1990s the WEU’s role should become a continuous source of controversy. The organisation was not only regarded an EU defence instrument, it was also seen as the European pillar within NATO. There was hence much uncertainty about what role the WEU actually had, and what role it could and should have.

What is important to notice is that the strength of the WEU was only on paper. The organisation was totally dependent on military contributions from the member states. Unlike NATO, the WEU had no integrated military structures and was not a collective defence organisation. Some clarification of its role came with the Petersberg declaration of 1992, in which the WEU decided to take on ‘humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in

against the Soviet threat in Europe. This question was particularly sensitive to France, who had experienced three devastating wars with her neighbour since German unification in 1871.

crisis management, including peacemaking’²⁰. Grant has a point when he argues that the tasks were ‘deliberately framed in such a vague way that they are all things to all people’²¹. But they still showed that the WEU had no intention of becoming a new NATO. Peace keeping operations would be the most important task.

Throughout the 1990s it also became clearer how WEU operations could take place. Important in this respect was the concept of ‘Combined Joint Task Forces’ (CJTF), which will be discussed below. This coincided with the launching of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO. The ESDI was supposed to give the Europeans some freedom to act independently of the USA, but must also be read as part of the ongoing burden sharing debate within the alliance. The idea was that Europe should take a broader share of the burden within NATO, by being able to take responsibility for autonomous operations. From the American point of view, the ESDI was seen as a way of strengthening NATO, and a signal that the WEU should not become an alliance independent of NATO and American control. The French, on the other hand, regarded the ESDI as an important possibility for Europe to act independently – *outside* American control.

The same ambiguity applied to the CJTF. With the CJTF concept, the WEU was offered ‘a “separable but not separate” military capability that would not be a costly duplication of NATO’s structure’ (Barry 1996:83). In other words, the Europeans would get access to NATO assets which they did not possess themselves (i.e. American equipment). This would enable the Europeans to act without US participation, but not without US approval. ‘In fact, the concept might be seen as a step toward maintaining NATO as the main forum of security consultation, as well as a manoeuvre to maintain European reliance on NATO and U.S. military assets’ (Chilton 1995:95). Simultaneously, there is no doubt that the

²⁰ Protocol (No. 1) on Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union.

²¹ Charles Grant, Director of the Centre for European Reform, quoted in House of Lords 2002:17.

CJTF strengthened EU efforts to operate as a military actor²². This could, in other words, imply growing importance of the EU as a security policy actor. The French saw this as a first step towards a decreased American role in Europe. The CJTF concept was developed at the NATO summit in Brussels in 1994, and completed during the 1996 Berlin summit (North Atlantic Council 1994, 1996).

The Norwegian government had welcomed the ESDI and the CJTF concepts, and supported the idea of Europe taking a broader share of the burden within NATO. There was, however, considerable Norwegian opposition to European defence operations outside the NATO framework and without US involvement. Although Norway became an associated member of the WEU from 1992, Norwegian influence was far less than within NATO. In addition, an independent European defence policy was seen as potentially dangerous as it could undermine US presence in Europe.

The EU members worked to pull the WEU closer to the union, as they expanded their cooperation in the field of foreign and security policy. With the Amsterdam treaty, the CFSP was equipped with a High Representative to provide a clearer sense of leadership. When Mr. Javier Solana was appointed ‘Mr. CFSP’ in June 1999 he also became the secretary general of the WEU. This way the EU gave a reassuring signal to the USA, that further developments would be in accordance with American interests. Mr. Solana was well known in Washington, being the former NATO general secretary. He was also a person, in whom the American trusted. From now on, a division of work between the two alliances gradually seemed to emerge. With the Amsterdam treaty, the EU adopted the Petersberg tasks, which the WEU itself had adopted five years earlier. The EU signalled a will to deal with somehow softer security challenges than NATO.

²² It is important to notice that the CJTF was established in a period when the competition between EU and NATO seemed to decrease. The relationship between France and the USA had steadily improved, as president Jacques Chirac took steps to bring France back into NATO’s integrated military structure. (Menon 2000:53). The process of reconciliation stagnated in 1997, due to a dispute over NATO’s southern command in Naples.

The EU should, however, take a much further step towards independent defence cooperation. The starting point was the British Labour government, taking office in 1997. The Prime Minister Tony Blair was much more positive to the EU than his predecessors, and he also saw the need for closer defence cooperation between the European states. The change of policy was stated in the Franco-British St. Malo, which paved the way for closer defence cooperation within the EU. In the declaration, the two countries agreed that the EU should be in a position to play its full role on the international stage. ‘To this end, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises’²³. As the British had been blocking such a development all through the 1990s, this was no less than a ‘diplomatic bombshell’ (Deighton 2001:321). A strong warning came from the Americans, who feared an undermining of NATO. The secretary of state talked about the unacceptable ‘3 Ds’: decoupling, duplication and discrimination, but was unable to stop the process going on (Howorth 2000:17).

From now on, the process accelerated. At the Cologne European Council in June 1999, an outline for a future European defence was presented. The member states decided to ‘launch a new step in the construction of the European Union’, and started preparations to take over ‘those functions of the WEU which will be necessary to fulfil (...) the Petersberg tasks’ (The European Council 1999a). The aim was further specified during the Helsinki European Council the same year, where the Headline Goal was adopted: By the year 2003, the member states should be able to ‘deploy rapidly and then sustain forces capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks (...) including the most demanding’ (The European Council 1999b). These forces should be deployed within 60 days, and be self-sustaining for a period of at least a year. At Helsinki an outline for new political and military bodies was also presented: A standing Political and Security Committee, a

²³ The St. Malo declaration was signed December 4th 1998. It is reprinted in Hill and Smith 2000, page 243.

Military Committee and a Military Staff would be created within the Council. With the Treaty of Nice, these plans were approved (The European Council 2000). With the Laeken European Council, the ESDP was declared operational (The European Council 2001). Since then, the EU has taken steps to put theory into action. Recent examples are an EU-led military operation in Macedonia (operation Concordia) and an EU force sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (operation Artemis).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have given a brief outline of Norwegian contemporary foreign policy history. We have seen that the relationship to international organisations has been a continuous source of controversy; especially when cooperation went beyond pure intergovernmentalism. Norwegian actors have generally been sceptical to all kinds of supranational cooperation. They preferred to keep a certain distance to European integration processes, and chose to stay outside the EC. The decision to join NATO was an important exception in this respect, and the decision was taken due to the war experience. We have seen that the entire Norwegian defence was based on the security guarantee provided by NATO.

This background is crucial to understand the Norwegian policy from the early 1990s onwards. The EU took on a more profound role in European security and defence policy, something that affected the roles of both NATO and the EU. In turn, this challenged traditional Norwegian policy. First, the discussion on Norway's relationship to the EU reoccurred. Second, EU defence cooperation threatened to make NATO less important, which in turn would marginalise Norway.

The purpose of the thesis is to study Norwegian responses to this development, and also to explain these responses. In order to do so, I will use rational choice theory and a social constructivist approach. This will be done in the next two chapters respectively.

4 NORWAY AS A RATIONAL ACTOR

‘There are a number of grounds for supposing that, over the coming years,
Norway could risk becoming increasingly distanced from the focus
of security policy affairs’
*Ministry of Defence*²⁴

In the following I will deal with the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation from the early 1990s onwards. How has Norway responded to increased integration in European security and defence policy? And how can we explain the Norwegian responses?

As mentioned, the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation are characterised by two distinct phases. The change came after the Franco-British St. Malo agreement in 1998. My task is to explain the Norwegian policy in these periods, and also the change of political course in 1998.

The first phase is the one from 1994 until 1998, and the period has three distinct characteristics: First, there was a focus on side-arenas, on organisations with only secondary importance in European security policy. The Norwegian government showed an increasing interest in organisations such as the Nordic Council and the OSCE as security institutions. Second, there was a focus on traditional issues, such as territorial defence and the importance of NATO. Third, Norwegian policy-makers were sceptical to the possibilities for increased defence cooperation within the EU.

The Norwegian policy changed considerably after the Franco-British St. Malo agreement in 1998. The second phase also has three distinct characteristics. First, there was a change of focus, away from political side arenas and towards the ESDP. Second, the focus gradually shifted away from territorial defence. Participation in international operations was increasingly seen as important to Norwegian security. Third, Norwegian actors suddenly appeared to believe in the ability of the EU to integrate in security and defence.

²⁴MoD, fact sheet no 03/95.

I have argued that there are two different ways of explaining the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. Either *the Norwegian responses were result of a deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation*. This implies that actors are well informed and are acting strategically. A second hypothesis in line with this is that *Norwegian actors deliberately underplayed issues that might lead to another EU-debate, including possible EU defence cooperation*.

An alternative explanation is that actors are less rational, and that they rather are behaving according to norms and culture. Implicitly, this means that they are not necessarily fully informed. My third hypothesis is that *Norwegian actors did not grasp the challenge represented by the EU’s changing role*. If this hypothesis is strengthened, a possible explanation might be the Norwegian foreign policy culture. The fourth hypothesis is that *a particular conception of Norway’s role in European, transatlantic and Nordic relations can best explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation*.

The two sets of hypotheses are developed on the basis of two different theoretical approaches, which have been described in chapter 2. The two latter hypotheses are based upon the social constructivist theory of Katzenstein and Risse. Their theory highlights the importance of identity, norms and culture in explaining foreign policy. The actors’ foreign policy identity is accordingly the independent variable, explaining the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. This will be further discussed in chapter 5.

In this chapter I will concentrate on the former hypotheses, which are based on Moravcsik’s theory of liberal intergovernmentalism. His theory relies on rational choice assumptions, and accordingly are actors’ self interests the independent variable explaining the Norwegian responses. According to Moravcsik’s theory we would expect Norwegian actors to be well informed and to be operating in accordance with a fixed set of preferences. We would expect

Norwegian policy to be based on a clear strategy aimed at protecting Norwegian interests.

In the following I will investigate this by focusing on the first two hypotheses, implying that the Norwegian policy was based on rational utility calculations. Indicators of this will be arguments underlining calculations of costs/benefits and interests to explain the Norwegian responses. Interests might be defined as Norwegian national interests as well as actors’ self interests.

In part 4.1, I will concentrate on the Norwegian understanding of EU defence cooperation. How was EU defence cooperation assumed to influence Norwegian interests? How did this change throughout the period studied? Can Norwegian scepticism be explained with references to Norwegian interests?

In part 4.2, I will further study Norwegian attempts to gain influence in European security and defence policy after 1994. In this part, I will test my first hypothesis, that *Norwegian responses were result of a deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation*. Was the Norwegian national interest used to explain the focus on side-arenas in European security and defence policy? Can we understand the Norwegian policy by looking at actors’ interests? And did this change after the St. Malo agreement?

Generally, we would assume the Norwegian policy to be based on a protection of Norwegian national interests. But there is also reason to focus more specifically on the domestic level, as actors might have additional interests to protect. This is especially relevant in this case, as the Norwegian EU debate had serious consequences to several actors. Moravcsik’s theory emphasises the importance of domestic actors, as states are only assumed to act ‘as if’ they are unitary actors. In practice the preferences are created through a struggle between domestic interest groups. These actors are behaving rationally to protect their own self interest, which might be different than the state interest as such. I will look at a specific interest assumed to be shared by several domestic actors: To avoid another EU debate. More specifically I want to test a hypothesis that *Norwegian*

actors deliberately underplayed issues that might lead to another EU-debate, including possible EU defence cooperation. An underlying assumption is that this might have influenced Norwegian actors’ views on EU defence cooperation. If we find that Norwegian actors wanted to avoid focusing on such cooperation, this might be an additional explanation to the Norwegian responses. Such an interest would strengthen actors’ sceptical view on EU defence cooperation, and make them even more eager to focus on side-arenas in European security and defence policy. This will be discussed in part 4.3.

4.1 EU defence cooperation and Norwegian interests

According to liberal intergovernmentalism we would expect Norwegian actors to be rather well informed and to have a clear understanding of their own interests. We would expect Norwegian actors to be well aware of developments within the EU, which in turn would be important to pursue a rational anti-marginalisation strategy. In the following I will investigate this by studying Norwegian actors’ understanding of EU defence cooperation. I will study how Norwegian actors interpreted developments within the EU, and how they explained their scepticism to EU defence cooperation. I will also investigate how the actors assumed the EU to influence Norwegian security.

In chapter 3, we have seen that the NATO membership became a fundamental part of Norwegian security and defence policy from 1949 onwards. The concept of territorial defence was based on defence against the Soviet Union, and the main task was to withhold an attack until allied assistance could be deployed. In other words, the entire Norwegian defence strategy was based upon the collective security guarantee provided by NATO. The Norwegian dependence on NATO also continued after the Cold War, and Norway was to a large extent reluctant to all reforms that might weaken NATO’s traditional role. This was reflected in Norwegian actors’ relationship to EU defence cooperation.

In official statements it is clearly expressed that a trend towards independent European defence cooperation went contrary to Norwegian interests. The Norwegian relationship to the WEU was one of the issues discussed at length by the Defence Commission established in 1990 (DC’90). The DC’90 made it quite clear that another reactivation of the WEU was a threat to Norwegian interests. The Commission was especially concerned with two aspects. First, that the WEU could damage the transatlantic relationship by undermining NATO. Second, that security cooperation outside the NATO-framework could put Norway on the sideline in European security discussions.

‘The Norwegian NATO-membership has until recently given Norway access to all important security policy discussions and meetings on equal footing. After Maastricht, important security discussions in Europe can be held within the WEU, an organisation in which Norway is not a member’. (NOU 1992:12, page 99)²⁵.

These views were shared by most Norwegian actors in this period. There seemed to be broad consensus that the Europeans should be careful in developing defence cooperation outside the NATO framework. It was in Norway’s interest that NATO continued as the main security organisation in Europe. If there should be closer defence cooperation within the WEU framework, it was important that the WEU was used to strengthen the European contributions within NATO. The commission concluded that Norway should become an associated member of the WEU, exactly to work for such a development. This was further underlined by some commission members the following way:

‘Under no circumstances does Norway want to give signals that contribute to a development reducing NATO’s role or weaken the basis for US involvement in the alliance. (...) Norway should therefore contribute to the development of a European security identity (...) as part of a broader transatlantic cooperation within NATO’ (NOU 1992:12, page 100²⁶).

²⁵ ‘Inntil nylig har NATO-medlemskap gitt Norge adgang til deltagelse i alle viktige sikkerhetspolitiske vurderinger og møter på like fot. Etter Maastricht-avtalen vil viktige utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitiske diskusjoner i Europa kunne føres i VEU, en organisasjon Norge ikke er tilknyttet’.

²⁶ ‘Under ingen omstendigheter ønsker Norge å sende signaler som bidrar til en utvikling som reduserer NATOs rolle eller svekker grunnlaget for amerikansk engasjement i alliansen. (...) Norge bør derfor så vidt

It was hence hoped that the WEU would strengthen a European security and defence identity (ESDI) within NATO, and that this could lead to a more equal burden sharing between USA and Europe. The Americans had for decades wanted the Europeans to shoulder a larger part of NATO contributions. They were sceptical, however, to French insistence that this should be accompanied by a stronger European role in the decision making process.

Norway became an associated member of the WEU with the adoption of the EEA agreement in 1992²⁷. The government used the same argumentation as the DC’90, arguing that the WEU was an important way of strengthening the European contribution within NATO. And whereas the Defence Commission described this as a goal to be pursued, the government portrayed it as an established fact. The defence ministry even claimed that there was broad consensus on this policy within NATO.

‘There is a broad consensus within NATO that Europe will have to take stronger responsibility for its own safety. On this background the European Security and Defence Identity is developed. This will strengthen the alliance. The NATO members agree that the WEU shall be the central frame for the development of such an identity’ (White Paper 40, 1993-94)²⁸.

The defence minister continued to describe the WEU in similar terms throughout the period. ‘A central objective for WEU; as the defence component of the European Union and as the institutional framework for the European pillar in NATO, is to strengthen transatlantic cooperation’ (Kosmo 1994). Based on Moravcik’s theory, we would expect Norwegian actors to be rather well-informed,

mulig og på denne måte bidra til utforming av en europeisk forsvarsidentitet og utvikling av det forsvars og sikkerhetspolitiske samarbeid i Europa *som ledd* i det bredere atlantiske samarbeid innen rammen av NATO’.

²⁷ Although Norway chose to stay outside the EU in 1994, the associated membership continued and was formalised in 1995. Full membership was out of question, as only EU members could become full members.

²⁸ ‘Det er enighet innenfor NATO om at Europa i tiden fremover vil måtte ta større ansvar for sin egen sikkerhet. Dette er bakgrunnen for utviklingen av en europeisk sikkerhets- og forsvarsidentitet innenfor Alliansen. Dette vil styrke Alliansen. NATO-landene er enige om at Den vesteuropeiske union (VEU) skal være den sentrale rammen for utviklingen av en slik identitet’.

and to have a clear idea of their own interests. So far, we have seen that Norwegian actors were strongly aware of the national interest, and that they seemed to be studying the development of the WEU closely.

The referendum on EU membership

Norway's associated WEU-membership was only regarded a temporary solution. The possibility of EU membership was becoming increasingly relevant, as both Sweden and Finland applied for membership. The Norwegian government chose to follow the Nordic neighbours, and in December 1992 Norway officially applied for membership in the EU.

To the government, foreign and security policy concerns were important to justify Norwegian EU membership domestically. As Johan Jørgen Holst argued, '(t)he uncertainty about future U.S. commitments in Europe, including military support, call for new forms of cooperation. Membership in the EC ensures greater security for the Nordic countries in such a situation because Russia is dependent on maintenance of good relations with continental Europe' (Holst 1993). Such views are reflected in the White Paper on Norwegian EU membership, where the focus on NATO simultaneously is underlined: 'A continued focus on NATO and membership in the EU is the best way for our country to meet the security policy challenges we face. (...) We must avoid decisions affecting our own security to be taken without Norwegian participation'. (White Paper no. 40, 1993-94, chapter 2.7.2²⁹).

Although the government was in favour of Norwegian membership in both the EU and the WEU, there are no signs that the fundamental Norwegian interest in NATO supremacy had changed. On the contrary, the government expressed views quite similar to those of the DC'90, and strongly underlined the importance of NATO supremacy. 'NATO retains its decisive importance for Norway's

²⁹ 'Det er med fortsatt satsing på NATO og med deltakelse i EU at vårt land best kan møte de sikkerhetspolitiske utfordringer vi vil stå overfor i resten av dette århundret og inn i det neste. (...) Vi må unngå at beslutninger som angår vår egen sikkerhet blir tatt uten norsk deltakelse'.

security since NATO represents an underlying guarantee through its capacity to mount a credible collective defence and to provide Allied reinforcements’ (Kosmo 1994). This view was unchanged throughout the 1990s. ‘NATO will continue to be the main fundamental of Norwegian security policy’ (Kosmo 1995a), ‘NATO will still be the cornerstone of the European security architecture. There is no alternative’ (Kosmo 1997).

The importance of NATO supremacy was further reflected in the Norwegian insistence that the WEU was part of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO. This argumentation continued with an even stronger insistence after the Norwegian EU referendum.

‘Through a series of decisions in NATO, EU and the WEU since 1991, the basis is created for an extensive integration of defence and security policy in Europe. NATO actively supports this development, and wants to strengthen the WEU’s role as the European pillar of the alliance’ (Kosmo1995a)³⁰.

These considerations are repeated by official papers from the Ministry of Defence. ‘One of the main aims of WEU cooperation is to develop this arrangement in such a way that it strengthens European identity in defence and security matters by acting as a supplement to NATO’ (MoD 1995, fact sheet no 03/95). The fact that the WEU also was an EU foreign policy instrument was toned down, often not mentioned at all. This is in accordance with Sjursen’s claim that there was an ‘almost systematic denial of the gradual strengthening of the EU foreign and security policy at the governmental level in Norway’ (2001:552). Norwegian actors seemed to be sceptical to the possibilities of further defence cooperation in the EU, and strongly disliked such attempts. As we would expect according to Moravcsik, these responses were based on rational utility considerations and explained with reference to Norwegian national interests. On the other hand, a

³⁰ ‘Gjennom en rekke vedtak i NATO, EU og Den vesteuropeiske union (VEU) siden 1991 er både det prinsipielle og det mer konkrete grunnlag lagt for en omfattende forsvars- og sikkerhetspolitisk integrasjon i Europa. NATO støtter aktivt opp om denne utviklingen, og går inn for at VEU’s rolle som Alliansens europeiske pilar skal styrkes’.

denial of developments within the EU might also indicate that Norwegian actors had an inaccurate understanding of EU defence cooperation. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

The fear of marginalisation

NATO continued to be the main fundamental in Norwegian security and defence policy but there were concerns about the future. These can be summed up by the word ‘marginalisation’. During the Cold War, Norway had enjoyed a pivotal position within NATO, in disproportion to the country’s military and economic strength (Tunander 1997:283). With the Soviet Union as a neighbour Norway had an important geopolitical position, and was therefore able to punch above her weight within the alliance. After the Cold War, this became increasingly difficult. The defence minister therefore found Norway to have a ‘multi-faceted security problem which first and foremost deal with assuring the country a linkage to the new political order, of avoiding being left on the sideline’ (Holst 1993). In 1995, the MoD found several reasons to assume that Norway became less important to the rest of the world. According to the ministry, Norway risked becoming increasingly distanced from the focus of security policy affairs.

‘Our non-membership of the EU, our limited influence as an associate member of the WEU, quite apart from reduced allied interest in the Norwegian region as a consequence of the high degree of stability in our part of the world, all serve to illustrate this development. An additional factor is the relative reduction in the significance of NATO as a vehicle for matters of security policy in Europe (...)’.
(MoD 1995, fact sheet no 03/95).

The ministry concluded that Norwegian non-membership in the EU ‘cannot be fully compensated by Norway’s membership of NATO’ (ibid). The defence minister continued to point at the threat of marginalisation, which he also linked to the EU conference leading to the Treaty of Amsterdam. ‘As a defence minister I cannot avoid underlining that our non-membership of the EU might have great

consequences to our security policy interests.’ (Kosmo 1996a)³¹. There are signs that the threat of marginalisation was accepted as a main challenge among the political actors. When the concept of Combined Joint Task Forces was introduced, the Norwegian government worked hard to obtain influence on such operations. The government underlined that all European NATO-allies must be able to participate in the WEU on equal footing as the full members of the WEU (White paper 59, 1996-97, chapter 1.1³²).

The Norwegian policy was quite stable in the period from 1994 to 1998. Despite a change of government, changes in Norwegian security and defence policy were only marginal. Dag Jostein Fjærvoll (from the Christian People’s Party) became defence minister from October 1997, and expressed basically the same views as his predecessor. ‘NATO will continue to be the key institution for security and defence consultations, and the central security mechanism. Other institutions, such as OSCE, WEU, and the EU may elaborate on this role, but will not replace it’ (Fjærvoll 1998a). As Mr. Kosmo before him, Fjærvoll found it particularly worrying that European security and defence policy increasingly was made within the EU and the WEU. ‘This means particular challenges for Norway following our associated membership in the WEU and our position outside the EU’ (Fjærvoll 1998b).

The Labour government had underlined the importance of NATO throughout its entire period in office. The coalition government continued this policy, stating that ‘the membership of NATO will be a very central part of Norwegian security- and defence policy in the foreseeable future, and the government assumes that NATO will remain the central security policy actor within Europe’ (White Paper no. 22, 1997-98, part 3).

³¹ ‘Som forsvarsminister kan jeg allikevel ikke unnlåte å gjøre oppmerksom på at vår manglende deltakelse på EUs Regjeringskonferanse i 1996, kan få stor betydning for våre egne sikkerhetspolitiske interesser’.

³² ‘Frå norsk hald har ein understreka at i slike tilfelle må alle europeiske NATO-allierte ha høve til å ta del i verksemda i VEU på like fot med dei andre NATO-landa i organisasjonen, dvs. dei fulle medlemmene’.

As its predecessor, the government continued to insist that defence cooperation within the WEU was a way of strengthening NATO. In line with Moravcsik’s assumptions, this was explicitly linked to the strong Norwegian interests of such a development. ‘We have been positive to the idea of increased European responsibility in security and defence policy (...). To us it is an important precondition that the development of the ESDI takes place with American understanding and acceptance’ (Fjærvoll 1998b)³³. Fjærvoll argued that there was agreement among the NATO countries, and that developments accordingly were in line with Norwegian interests.

‘Over years, there has been consensus within NATO to develop a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) and to reinforce the European role and responsibilities within the Alliance. (...) It is vital that all European allies, regardless of affiliation with the WEU, are automatically given full rights in all phases of a WEU operation utilizing NATO resources. This now seems to be taken care of’. (Fjærvoll 1998a).

We hence find that Norwegian actors strongly underlined the importance of NATO. They were generally very sceptical to EU defence cooperation, and this was explained with reference to the national interests. Such a clear understanding of self interests is precisely what we would expect, according to Moravcsik. However, his assumption that actors generally are well informed is not confirmed. There are signs that the Norwegian actors were not fully aware of developments within the EU, and that their descriptive considerations were influenced by their normative ones. Norwegian actors not only thought that defence cooperation outside the NATO framework *should not* take place. They also believed that it *would not* take place. The latter might then be a result of an inaccurate understanding of EU policy, or even wishful thinking. Norwegian actors were proved wrong at St. Malo.

³³‘Fra norsk side har vi vært positiv til tanken om økt europeisk ansvar i sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitikken generelt, og spesielt til at ESDI skulle utvikles innenfor Alliansen. For oss er det samtidig en sentral forutsetning at en videreutvikling av ESDI skjer med amerikansk forståelse og aksept’.

St. Malo and beyond

With the St. Malo agreement of 1998, Norway’s worst fears seemed to materialise. From now on it was clear that the EU would take on a much larger role in European security and defence policy. The St. Malo agreement led to a change in Norwegian actors’ description of the EU’s consequences to Norwegian security and defence policy. It was gradually accepted that EU defence cooperation was something different from the ESDI within NATO. ‘We have to acknowledge that if the development is heading towards a real common European foreign-, defence- and security policy, Norway will be facing challenges of considerable dimensions’ (Fjærvoll 1999a)³⁴.

The minister of Foreign Affairs went even further, arguing that a ‘dissolution of the WEU would create totally new challenges for Norway as regards participation in crisis management and European security in general. (...) The continuation of full Norwegian participation in European security policy cooperation is also important, especially for our position in NATO cooperation’ (Vollebæk 1999a). To protect the Norwegian interest, the minister drew quite drastic conclusions. He argued that ‘(i)n practice this will have to be ensured by involving Norway in discussions on defence and security policy issues within the EU’ (ibid).

Norwegian actors’ responses to St. Malo seem incompatible with some of the assumptions made by Moravcsik. The immediate reactions weaken the impression of rationality and strategy, as the Norwegian actors seemed to be taken completely by surprise. Although it was clear that the changed situation had dramatic consequences, Norwegian actors neither seemed to know what was going on or how they should deal with it. ‘The first reaction in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry was to send out a “scout”, a centrally placed diplomat, to London and

³⁴ ‘Vi må erkjenne at dersom utviklingen går i retning av å utvikle en reelt sett felles europeisk utenriks-, forsvars- og sikkerhetspolitikk, vil Norge stå overfor utfordringer av anselige dimensjoner. Jeg vil hevde at denne problemstillingen kan komme til å bli av avgjørende betydning for vårt lands fremtidige sikkerhetspolitiske situasjon’.

Paris to seek information about the new political alliance’ (Græger 2002:43). If the government actually was taken by surprise, this is incompatible with Moravcsik’s assumption of actors being well informed. This will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

Although Norwegian actors gradually understood the consequences of St. Malo, they still seemed to lack a clear idea of how they should respond to it. In 1999, the government took a major and rather unprecedented initiative. It sent a Pro Memoria to all EU countries prior to the Helsinki European Council. The government wanted to ‘be fully involved’ in the endeavours and suggested several arrangements to ensure this. The government went quite far, in practice suggesting that Norway should enjoy similar rights as EU members. The Norwegian government would on its side contribute with troops to EU military operations. ‘In practical terms, the Norwegian forces already designated to the WEU (and to the UN, the OSCE and NATO) were also made available to the EU, and this happened without any public debate’ (Græger 2002:63). As several times before, Norway hence tried to join an organisation without formally joining it. ‘The PM was in fact an attempt to ride two horses simultaneously. We wanted to obtain influence, but wanted to continue as a non-member of the EU’ (Interview Løwer 2003).

The result of the initiative was rather limited. ‘A comparison of Norway’s ambitions with the actual outcome of the Helsinki European Council in December 1999 clearly shows that Norway’s diplomatic efforts failed’ (Rieker 2003b:232). Although the initiative was unsuccessful, it represents a clear sign that the Norwegian policy had changed considerably and was now aimed at the EU directly. Norwegian actors also seemed to believe in further integration in EU defence cooperation. According to Moravcsik’s theory, this could be understood as a change of strategy. On the other hand, there are several signs that Norwegian responses were rather random, and not reflecting any clear strategy.

The Norwegian interests did not seem to have changed. The government continued to regard EU defence cooperation (now known as the ESDP) as a threat

to Norwegian interests. The Minister of Foreign Affairs underlined this on several occasions, finding the ESDP process to have ‘an impact on one of the mainstays of Norwegian security policy: the central role played by NATO in all matters affecting the security of the member countries’ (Vollebæk 2000). The emphasis on NATO as the main security organisation in Europe also continued, and in this respect there were no differences between the different governments from 1998 onwards. ‘Disregarding the question of membership, it is definitely in our interest that NATO continues as the main forum for Western security and defence cooperation’ (Godal 2000).

The fear of marginalisation did not decrease. On the contrary, the ESDP was seen as extremely serious in this respect. As the DC’90, the government found it most worrying that the EU created a forum for security and defence discussions outside the NATO framework. Countries outside the EU were not offered association agreements fully compensating their non-membership. The government therefore had to accept that ‘consultations, dialogue and participation in crisis management operations will only partly compensate the Norwegian non-membership’ (White Paper no. 12, 2000-2001, part 2.4)³⁵. This was based on an understanding of the strong reluctance among EU members to give non-EU members a position within the ESDP similar to their position within the WEU.

It is hence possible to detect a gradual change of policy, which was settled after the Labour government took office in March 2000. The government acknowledged that the ESDP meant something different than the ESDI, as it implied EU defence cooperation outside NATO (and US) control. To Norway it was crucial that the ESDP developed with American understanding and acceptance; and that the interests of non-EU NATO countries were taken care of.

³⁵ ‘Regjeringen anser at den største politiske utfordringen for Norge ligger i at EU-landene nå oppretter et forum seg imellom for løpende drøftelser av europeiske sikkerhets- og forsvarspolitiske spørsmål. (...) Land utenfor EU vil ikke kunne få tilknytningsordninger som tilsvarer full deltakelse. Konsultasjonsordninger, dialog og medvirkning i konkrete krisehåndteringsoperasjoner vil etter Regjeringens syn bare i noen grad kompensere for at Norge ikke er del av dette løpende samråd’.

‘It is vital for Norway that this capability does not duplicate NATO structures, and thereby potentially weaken the Alliance. (...) A satisfactory framework covering the EU and the six NATO countries outside the Union is essential if the need for closer dialogue between all parties concerned is to be met’ (Godal 2001).

The idea of the ‘WEU as ESDI’ seemed to have vanished after the WEU became an integrated part of the ESDP. Norwegian actors seemed to have nuanced their views and opinions on the matter. The centre-right government of October 2001 continued the policy of its predecessor, with a better understanding of the ESDP process. The government still hoped that such cooperation would not undermine the primary role of NATO.

‘The goal should be a division of responsibilities and tasks among the two organisations (...). The government’s view is that this will lead to a more equal burden sharing within NATO; strengthen the transatlantic ties; and also strengthen the Euro-Atlantic apparatus for crisis management’ (White Paper 12, 2000-2001, part 9.4)³⁶.

Conclusion

We have seen that Norwegian actors had a quite clear idea of Norway’s position in European security and defence policy. There seems to have been a broad consensus that Norwegian interests were first and foremost secured by NATO. The Atlantic alliance was seen as the primary security organisation. Other organisations, as the EU and the WEU, were seen as less important in this respect. Their potential damaging role was still underlined. It was argued that EU defence cooperation went contrary to Norway’s interests, as it could increase the problem of marginalisation. This is true for both periods studied.

According to Moravcsik, we would expect actors to have a clearly defined interest, and to be rather well informed of developments at the international arena.

³⁶ ‘Målet bør være en tjenelig fordeling av ansvar og oppgaver mellom de to organisasjonene som også tar hensyn til EUs og NATOs selvstendighet og beslutningsautonomi. Dette vil etter Regjeringens syn bidra til bedre byrdefordeling mellom de allierte i NATO, styrke de transatlantiske forbindelser og styrke det samlede euro-atlantiske apparat for krisehåndtering’.

In this part, we have seen that Norwegian actors had a very clear idea of their interests. However, the assumption of actors being well informed is not confirmed, as St. Malo seemed to come as a surprise to Norwegian actors. If the latter is true, it indicates that liberal intergovernmentalism is insufficient to fully explain the Norwegian policy.

4.2 A focus on side-arenas

We have seen that Norwegian actors had quite clearly defined interests in European security and defence policy. According to Moravcsik we would then expect them to act strategically, ‘pursuing coherent national strategies’ (1998:22). In this part I will investigate this by testing my first hypothesis, that *the Norwegian responses were result of a deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation*. As marginalisation was seen as a main threat to Norway’s interest, we would expect Norwegian actors to pursue a strategy of ‘anti-marginalisation’. In the following I will look for signs of such a strategy.

Influence through neighbours

It was accepted that the decision to stay outside the EU had implications for Norwegian security. According to the defence minister, there was a need to work even more actively to protect the country’s interest in the aftermath of the EU referendum (Kosmo 1995a)³⁷. One way of gaining influence was to work for closer bilateral cooperation with Norway’s allies and neighbours. Of special importance was the cooperation with Sweden and Finland. Both countries had decided to join the EU from January 1st 1995, and to the Norwegian government they became increasingly important as information sources. This was expressed as part of the Norwegian strategy to gain influence and obtain information.

³⁷ ‘De endrede rammebetingelser vårt ikke-medlemskap innebærer, forutsetter et enda mer aktivt norsk engasjement internasjonalt for å ivareta våre sikkerhetspolitiske interesser’.

‘To Norway, our rejection of membership in the EU has increased the need to extend our bilateral connections to close allies in Europe and transatlantic, and to our neighbours Sweden and Finland’ (Kosmo 1995b)³⁸.

The defence minister accepted that the changed environment would necessitate a more active Norwegian engagement internationally in order make the Norwegian voice heard. During the Cold War, Norway tacitly held Sweden informed of developments within NATO. After 1994, Norway expected Sweden to do the same on developments within the EU. The view that the Nordic cooperation could be used this way is evident throughout both periods studied. ‘The six-monthly meetings of the Nordic Defence Ministers provide a forum of growing significance (...)’ (MoD 1995, fact sheet no 03/95). There are few traces of change after Labour lost governmental power in 1997.

‘The Nordic dimension currently carries great weight in Norwegian security and defence policy. It manifests itself in a close and comprehensive security dialogue at the Nordic Defence Ministerial Meetings which are held twice a year’ (Fjærvoll 1998a).

These views are reflected in official documents: ‘To Norway it will be important to maintain the dialogue with Denmark, Finland and Sweden about EU developments, whereas Sweden and Finland have an interest in getting information about NATO’ (White Paper no. 22, 1997-98)³⁹.

This is in line with Dybesland’s finding that the Nordic Council was seen as an important forum for exchange of information. He finds that the actors from the beginning saw a clear potential for a ‘trade’ of NATO-information against EU-information (2000). Græger even argues that ‘(t)he Nordic countries represent the

³⁸ ‘For Norges vedkommende har vårt nei til medlemskap i EU forsterket behovet for å bygge ut de tosidige forbindelser med nære allierte i Europa og transatlantisk, samt våre naboland Sverige og Finland’.

³⁹ ‘For Norge vil det være av stor betydning å opprettholde dialogen både med Danmark, Finland og Sverige om utviklingen i EU, mens det for Sverige og Finland er av vesentlig betydning å motta informasjon om samarbeidet i NATO’.

most important link to the EU for Norway, bilaterally as well as within the Nordic Council co-operation’ (Græger 2002:51).

There is no doubt that Norwegian politicians expected the Nordic Council to be an important forum after 1994. As Sweden and Finland increasingly were preoccupied with security and defence cooperation within the EU, there was a danger that the increased Norwegian focus on Nordic cooperation came at a time where its importance dropped in the neighbour countries. There are also signs that such an exchange became less useful than Norwegian politicians had thought and hoped. ‘The Nordic EU countries consult each other each day on EU issues. The EU agenda is so full of meetings that it is scarcely time and resources to inform Norway and Iceland’ (Dybesland 2000:59⁴⁰).

Although the results may have been more limited than the government hoped, the strategy of using the Nordic Council to gain influence was an important part of the Norwegian anti-marginalisation strategy. As we have seen, this policy was based on an acceptance that it was necessary to compensate for Norway’s non-membership in the EU. The policy was clearly explained with reference to Norwegian national interests, as we would expect according to liberal intergovernmentalism. Interestingly, the strong focus on Nordic cooperation continued after St. Malo. It remained of crucial importance to the governments in both periods studied.

‘Nordic cooperation is an important channel for Norway towards the EU. The Nordic countries have an active cooperation in the field of EU/EEA issues. (...) The government regards it an important task to strengthen contacts, information exchange and influence towards the EU through Nordic cooperation’. (White Paper 12, 2000-2001)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ ‘De nordiske EU-land konsulterer hverandre hver eneste dag om EU-saker. EU-kalenderen er så tettepakket med møter at det blir knapt med tid og ressurser til å informere Norge og Island’.

⁴¹ ‘Det nordiske samarbeidet fungerer som en viktig kanal for Norge inn mot EU. De nordiske land har et aktivt samarbeid om EU/EØS-saker. (...) Regjeringen ser det som en viktig oppgave å styrke kontaktene, informasjonsutvekslingen og påvirkningsmulighetene i forhold til EU gjennom det nordiske samarbeidet’.

The prime minister continued to argue that Nordic cooperation was a good way of gaining influence in EU processes, finding this cooperation ‘an arena to protect Nordic interests vis-à-vis the EU and Europe’ (Bondevik 2001)⁴².

Bilateral cooperation with the USA

After the EU referendum in 1994, the government worked to improve the bilateral relationship to important allies and neighbours. In addition to the Nordic countries, the bilateral relationship to the USA was of special importance. In the aftermath of the Norwegian EU referendum, the defence minister especially underlined the importance of a good relationship to the USA (See Kosmo 1995b). To the government it was important that the USA continued to regard Norway as an important ally with a strategically geographical position close to Russia.

‘It will also be in Norway’s interest to develop our bilateral relationship with the US. The increased significance of closer bilateral contacts with our main allies in the wake of Norway’s No to EU membership applies especially to our relationship with the US’ (MoD Fact Sheet 1995).

To Norway it was important that the USA regarded Norway as an important partner, also outside the NATO framework. The government particularly focused on this policy in the first years after the Norwegian EU referendum. The defence minister underlined the importance that ‘the USA does not see Norway as just another part of Europe, but as a country where self-interest is served by maintaining closer bi-lateral connections’ (Kosmo 1996b).

Within the Norwegian foreign policy elite there seemed to be a quite broad consensus on this policy. Whereas left-wing parties earlier had criticised the close Norwegian relationship to the USA within NATO, this criticism weakened in the run-up to the EU referendum. An important reason was that the parties in favour of Norwegian membership used security policy concerns as an argument to join

⁴² ‘Det nordiske samarbeidet er en arena for å ivareta nordiske interesser overfor EU og Europa. De nordiske statsministrene har fornyet drøftelsene om europaspørsmål i våre møter’.

the union. In this situation, eurosceptic parties claimed that Norway’s interests were fully taken care of with the NATO membership. There are signs that these parties accepted a close relationship to the USA as the price to pay, to keep Norway outside the EU (Njølstad 1997:337).

It is somehow paradoxical that such a consensus emerged at the time where the USA became less interested in Norway. When the Cold War ended, the Norwegian geopolitical position as a Soviet neighbour became less important. There are several signs of an American downgrading of the relationship to Norway. First, the Americans were less willing to pay for Norwegian intelligence than they had been during the Cold War. During the autumn of 1992, Congress had decided to cut this spending considerably. This led to considerable cuts in the Norwegian intelligence service, affecting one third of its employees (Tamnes 1997:140). Second, the USA wanted to cut down on military equipment stored in Norway in peacetime. Third, the USA reduced the extent of its military air support, by cutting the number of Co-located Operating Bases (Njølstad 1997:338). The impression of Norway being less important is further enhanced by changes within NATO⁴³.

In this situation, the government worked increasingly hard to maintain American attention towards Norway. The government tried to gain acceptance for the special problems in the north, and especially the Russian military presence near the Norwegian (and NATO’s) border. To some degree the government succeeded in keeping American military equipment on Norwegian soil, by shouldering a much larger part of the expenses. Military exercises with American and NATO allies were also used as means to keep the allies’ focus on Norway. The policy was summed up by the defence minister in the following way:

‘The reductions in the USA’s commitments to Europe affect Norway because our defence policy has been and is, based on allied reinforcement. Advance stockpiling

⁴³ Norway ‘lost’ a NATO command in Oslo (Kolsås), when a new military structure was introduced in 1994. Further changes in NATO’s structure and strategic concept reflected a less significant role for Norway.

and regular exercises are therefore essential to maintain the credibility of our defences. (...) We must do our best to make both the USA and NATO as a whole see the necessity of maintaining a realistic plan for the reinforcement on Norwegian territory should a crisis arise’ (Kosmo 1996b).

The government expressed the bilateral relationship to the USA as an important part of the anti-marginalisation strategy. As we have seen, this policy was to a large degree explained with reference to Norwegian geopolitical interests. Although the government was more eager to underline this in the immediate aftermath of the EU referendum, this is true for both periods studied. The different governments continued to underline the importance of the bilateral relationship to the USA, and they still do. This policy is exemplified by Norwegian participation in coalitions of the willing, for instance in Afghanistan. According to the defence minister, Norway had ‘a moral duty to fight terrorism and to share the burdens with the coalition partners (...) Alliance solidarity within NATO must be taken seriously’ (Devold 2002)⁴⁴. As NATO did not take over the command of ISAF forces until August 2003, the relationship to the USA seemed to be the main concern. The Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik justified Norwegian participation in Iraq likewise, as this was important to improve transatlantic relations (Aftenposten 2003a).

A multifaceted strategy?

As we have seen, Norwegian actors regarded EU defence cooperation as being against the Norwegian interest. After the referendum of 1994, Norway was unable to participate fully in such cooperation as only EU members could become full members of the WEU. The government took several steps in order to compensate for this lack of influence. I have touched upon the two most important aspects of this policy: to pursue influence through the Nordic neighbours and to maintain a

⁴⁴ ‘Ett år etter er det mange som spør hvorfor Norge er med på krigføringen i Afghanistan. (...) Mitt svar er: Vi er moralsk forpliktet til å bekjempe terrorismen og dele byrdene med andre land i koalisjonen. (...) Alliansesolidariteten i NATO må tas på alvor. Det er jo nettopp den vi bygger *vår* trygghet på i Norge. Det er derfor også i vår egen interesse å delta’.

good bilateral relationship to the USA. Overall, the Norwegian policy can be characterised as multifaceted strategy, where several channels were used as means to gain influence in European security policy. Even the OSCE was used this way, when Norway chaired the organisation in 1999. According to the prime minister, the organisation was of particular importance as it included all European countries – in contrast to the EU (Bondevik 1998). Bondevik argued that with the chairmanship, Norway would be able to ‘take responsibility for the future developments of Europe’ (Aftenposten 1998a).

With Moravcsik’s theory as a starting point, the Norwegian policy can be seen as a rational way to protect the national interests. In part 4.1, we have seen that Norway had a clearly defined interest in the NATO membership, and wanted the alliance to remain the primary security organisation in Europe. We have also seen that Norwegian actors were aware of the dangers represented by EU defence cooperation in this context. Such cooperation was seen to be a threat to Norwegian interests, as it could lead to a marginalisation of Norway – on top of an increased marginalisation within NATO.

In this chapter, we have seen how the actors tried to act rationally, in order to deal with the marginalisation problem. They pursued a policy of using several diplomatic channels as bridges to the EU, and they tried to access information and influence EU developments this way. This was naturally portrayed as a rational strategy by the government, despite the fact that effectiveness varied considerably.

There are hence some traces of a *deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation*, as my first hypothesis suggests. However, the impression of a rational strategy is weakened by the reactions to the St. Malo agreement. The government seemed to be taken by surprise by the Franco-British agreement, which had serious consequences to Norway. In this situation, the Norwegian focus on side-arenas was gravely insufficient. Although the focus on side-arenas continued, the government changed its policy considerably. As the initial policy changes seemed random and

inaccurate to deal with the challenge, this indicates that the Norwegian actors were not as well informed as Moravcsik’s theory assumes. It also indicates that the anti-marginalisation policy was far less strategic than what we would expect, according to liberal intergovernmentalism.

4.3 The fear of another EU debate

We have seen that Norwegian actors generally were sceptical to EU defence cooperation. They were concerned about potential marginalisation, and took several steps to deal with that challenge (as shown in part 4.2). So far, I have been concentrating on whether the Norwegian policy can be explained with reference to Norwegian national interests.

There is also reason to focus more specifically on the domestic level. Moravcsik assumes state preferences to be created through a struggle between domestic interest groups. Their interests are therefore important to understand all aspects of the Norwegian policy. In the following I will test the hypothesis that *Norwegian actors deliberately underplayed issues that might lead to another EU-debate, including possible EU defence cooperation*. If this hypothesis is strengthened, it will represent an additional explanation to why actors were sceptical to EU defence cooperation. It might also help us to understand their eagerness to focus on side arenas in both periods studied.

‘The question of Europe’ had been extremely controversial in Norway. As we have seen in chapter 3, the question had led to upheaval in the Norwegian political landscape. Both referendums had led to a negative result, despite the governing party (Labour) being clearly in favour of Norwegian membership. The eurosceptic parties benefited from this and experienced stronger electoral support when the question of Europe was high on the agenda. This was especially evident for the Centre party in the 1993 election, when the party almost doubled in size. In addition to the Centre Party, the Socialist Left Party was strongly against Norwegian membership.

For the other parties the EU question was a rather difficult one. The reason is that parties not only pursue vote-seeking, office seeking and policy-seeking; they also have an interest in internal unity. The latter does not necessarily imply that all party members should share the same views, but rather that different opinions should not result in open conflicts damaging party unity (Saglie 2000:12). This is particularly important in the Norwegian EU debate, as the question divided several of the main political parties.

The Labour Party is of special interest of two reasons: First, it was a governmental party on several occasions, and had been in government prior to both EU referendums. Second, the party was internally divided on the issue. Within the party there was a considerable opposition to Norwegian EU membership.

As late as 1990 the party had not taken a clear stand on the issue. The party programme only stated that Norway should choose the ‘association to the EC, which is in line with our national interests’ (Arbeiderpartiet 1990)⁴⁵. This might have reflected the sensitivity of the issue, as the party lost more than the referendum in 1972: It lost its governmental position, a considerable number of voters turned their backs to the party, and a eurosceptic group had even broken out of the party to join a newly founded left-wing party. In the 1990s, the party leadership was very cautious in its handling of the issue. It seemed that the party was reluctant to take a clear stand, either because the government wanted to avoid a controversial debate, or because it wanted to use the EEA agreement as a bridge to EU membership at a later stage (Furre 1999:540). This became impossible when the other Nordic countries chose to apply for membership.

During the Labour party congress in November 1992, the party came out in favour of Norwegian membership, finding that ‘Norway naturally belongs in a binding cooperation with democratic countries on our own continent’

⁴⁵ ‘Norge må velge den tilknytningsform til EF, som tjener våre nasjonale interesser’.

(Arbeiderpartiet 1992)⁴⁶. At the party congress there had been a considerable opposition to the decision (Mjøset 1997:312). The question hence remained a difficult one, and to the party leadership it was imperative to avoid a complete division of the party. To avoid this, eurosceptic groups were allowed to organise within the party. This was a response to the fact that only the Centre Party had more eurosceptic parliamentarians than Labour (Aftenposten 1993). To avoid an internal division during the election campaign in 1993, the party leadership also tried to downplay the EU issue by focusing on full employment instead. In times of election, the question of EU membership represented a very difficult topic to the party (Saglie 2000:61).

After the referendum, the party and the government tried to continue business as usual. In contrast to 1972, Labour continued in government, and the party organisation was less damaged by the struggle than last time (Furre 1999:542). The EU question seemed to be settled for years ahead, and Labour underlined that it would not work for another referendum. ‘The decision of the people’ was to be respected – at least until the parliamentary election in 2001 (Arbeiderpartiet 1996).

In the Norwegian political landscape, only the Conservative Party was clearly in favour of Norwegian EU membership. Within the party organisation and among the party’s supporters there was a widespread support for Norway becoming member of the EU. But the conservatives would not work actively to promote Norwegian membership for several years after the 1994 referendum. The party stated that it respected the result, and that Norway could never become a member unless a majority of the population voted in favour (Høyre 1997).

Both the Christian People’s Party and the Liberal Party were against Norwegian EU membership (Kristelig Folkeparti 1997, Venstre 1997). To both parties the question had been a difficult one. Within the Christian People’s Party

⁴⁶ ‘Arbeiderpartiet vil at Norge skal søke om medlemskap i EF, fordi vi mener at Norge hører naturlig hjemme i et forpliktende samarbeid med de demokratiske land i vår egen verdensdel’.

there had been considerable controversies about EU policy. The question of Norwegian participation in the European Economic Area (EEA) was even more controversial than the question of membership. The party officially supported the EEA agreement, but resisted Norwegian membership in the union. The party leadership had a hard time defending this position, and had to fight a two-front war. Within the party there was a strong opposition to the EEA, but also a fraction in favour of Norwegian EU membership. The party leadership therefore tried to focus on other issues, although not very successfully (Saglie 2000:144).

The Liberal party embodies an example of the dangers connected to the EU issue. The 1972 referendum had torn the party totally apart; the fraction in favour of Norwegian membership broke out to form a brand new party. Neither the new nor the ‘old’ liberal party was able to obtain an important position in the political landscape. Although the parties merged in 1988, they did not have any representatives in parliament until the election in 1993. The party shared the position of the Christian People’s Party, being in favour of the EEA agreement but against Norwegian membership in the EU.

The right-wing Progressive Party had been ambivalent; in 1989 it stated not to have an opinion of the matter. The EU question was potentially dangerous, as the party was strongly divided internally (Saglie 2000:81). As the debate proceeded, the party was forced to take a stand and came out in favour of membership. This position was still somehow ambiguous, as the party decided to support Norwegian membership, but resist federal aspects within the EU (Fremskrittspartiet 1993)⁴⁷. Generally, the party tried to keep a low profile in the EU debate, waiting for the storm to pass (Saglie 2000:94). On this background there would be no reason for the party to actively promote another EU debate in

⁴⁷ ‘Fremskrittspartiet vil si JA til EF – Nei til Union’.

the aftermath of the referendum. This also seems to be the case; the party seemed to be satisfied with the EEA agreement (Fremskrittspartiet 1997)⁴⁸.

The evidence presented above shows that none of the main political parties had any interest of raising the question of Norwegian EU membership after 1994. We have seen that the question was difficult, as several of the parties were internally divided on the issue. Assuming an interest in party unity, they did not have any reason to focus on issues that might provoke another debate on EU membership. If we also assume that the parties pursued a policy of office seeking, there were additional reasons to avoid focusing on EU-related issues. To several parties, a downplaying of EU issues was seen as necessary to stay in government.

Governmental difficulties

The parties’ stand on the EU issue had direct consequences for the governments in both periods studied. From 1994 to 1997, Labour formed a one-party minority government. The party took several steps to obtain Norwegian influence within the EU, described in part 4.2. As we have seen the EU question had been a difficult one and the government mainly concentrated on other issues.

After the 1997 election a coalition government took office. The government consisted of the Christian People’s Party, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party. The government parties were all against Norwegian EU membership, but all in favour of the NATO membership. To the government, it was therefore convenient to portray EU defence cooperation as a way of strengthening NATO.

As we have seen, the marginalisation problem had been used as an argument to join the EU. The changing role of the WEU threatened to make the marginalisation problem even more serious, which in turn could provoke another debate on Norway’s relationship to the EU. The government should therefore have all interests in focusing on the limits of EU defence cooperation. An insistence that

⁴⁸ ‘Fremskrittspartiet tar til etterretning at det norske folk har sagt nei til norsk medlemskap i EU. (...) Fremskrittspartiet vil basere Norges forhold til EU på EØS-avtalen’.

the WEU was only a way of strengthening NATO would imply that Norway could eat the cake and have it. NATO then remained the important security organisation in Europe, in line with Norwegian preferences. Simultaneously we participated in EU endeavours through the WEU (Interview MoD employee 2003).

In 1998, the Franco-British St. Malo agreement changed the situation fundamentally. It was no longer possible to deny the prospect of further integration of EU defence cooperation outside the NATO framework. The defence minister found this to have considerable consequences to the Norwegian security and defence policy. Dag Jostein Fjærvoll, known as a eurosceptic, officially announced that he considered changing his opinion on Norwegian EU membership (Aftenposten 1998b). This was a very drastic step to take, and the aftermath of the episode clearly showed the government’s interest in avoiding focus on the issue. The defence minister received strong criticism from his colleagues in the government, who found his behaviour unforgivable. ‘When I said that developments might have consequences to our relationship to the EU, this was simply too controversial. The fear of another EU debate probably explains some of the strong reactions’ (Interview Fjærvoll 2003).

In a government reshuffle in March 1999, Eldbjørg Løwer from the Liberal Party became the new defence minister. Løwer was known to be in favour of Norwegian EU membership, and soon faced the same challenges as her predecessor.

‘If one fully should take the consequences of developments within the EU, this would have led to another EU debate. I was part of a eurosceptic government, and it was therefore important to focus on the alternatives. As long as NATO enjoyed such a strong position, it was possible to live with the situation’ (Interview Løwer 2003).

In March 2000, Labour once more formed a one-party minority government, but did not stress the question of EU membership. In its programme, the party had already decided to put the question on hold at least until 2001. In November 2000

the party decided to give itself some manoeuvring space, and opened for the possibility of another EU debate during the next years (Arbeiderpartiet 2000). The government did not have time to change its policy as Labour lost the parliamentary election in 2001.

Another coalition government was formed, consisting of the Christian People’s Party, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. The parties had strongly diverging views on the EU, and in practice a eurosceptic line was conducted. The Conservatives found that a Norwegian EU membership was out of question for the time being, which was confirmed by the leader Jan Petersen.

‘We have a vision of Europe, going further than any other party. But as there is no possibility to realise this in the foreseeable future, we would not let this prohibit the government formation’ (Aftenposten 2001)⁴⁹.

In such a situation no government party had any interest in discussing another EU referendum, and the question was put on hold until 2005. The government even introduced a ‘suicide clause’, promising to resign if the question should arise. This was quite exceptional, raising eyebrows abroad (See Economist 2001).

Policy seeking versus office seeking and internal unity

As several parties found the EU a threat to internal unity and political power, policy seeking seems to have lost the trade-off. Among political actors there was a widespread acceptance that the question of Europe should remain buried for years to come. That such considerations existed is to a large degree confirmed by the interview sources. The former leader of the parliamentary defence committee, Hans Røsjorde, finds this to be especially relevant in the run-up to elections, not least during the election of 1997 which was the first parliamentary election after the Norwegian EU referendum.

⁴⁹ ‘- Europa-visjonen går lenger hos oss enn i noe annet parti, herunder Ap. Men når det ikke er mulighet for å realisere dette standpunktet i overskuelig fremtid, ville vi ikke at dette skulle hindre en regjeringsdannelse som det ellers er grunnlag for’.

‘The Norwegian relationship to the WEU was seen as part of the Norwegian security and defence policy, separate from the Norwegian EU policy. The parties clearly tried to avoid all issues that might reignite the EU debate. Nobody wanted to bring fuel to the fire’ (Interview Røsjorde 2003).

Some parliamentarians and interest groups occasionally raised the question of another EU debate, also with an explicit focus on Norwegian security and defence policy (See for instance Aftenposten 2003b). Among the main political actors, however, there was no interest in such a debate. ‘Foreign and security policy will be an increasingly important argument in favour of Norwegian membership. These days, however, no political party seems to want the EU question back on the agenda’ (Interview Nybakk 2003).

Conclusion

We have seen that Norwegian actors were strongly reluctant to another EU debate. Parties in favour of Norwegian EU membership seemed to tone down their ambition of policy seeking, as this would conflict with their interests of internal unity, office seeking and even vote seeking. This is largely confirmed by the interview sources, arguing that most political actors wanted to avoid another EU debate. Accordingly were all issues which might re-ignite the debate toned down. The Norwegian relationship to EU defence cooperation was definitely such an issue: If EU defence cooperation undermined Norwegian security as a non-member a natural consequence would exactly be another debate on membership. This would especially be the case if EU defence cooperation was accompanied by a less important role for NATO, and a decreased American role in Europe.

This strengthens the second hypothesis that *Norwegian actors deliberately underplayed issues that might lead to another EU debate, including possible EU defence cooperation*. In turn, this helps us to better understand the Norwegian responses. As we would expect according to liberal intergovernmentalism, the Norwegian policy was officially explained with references to the national interest.

Moravcsik also invites us to study the domestic level, and we have clearly seen that the Norwegian policy was in line with actor' interest of avoiding a new EU debate. With a sceptical attitude to EU defence cooperation, and a focus on NATO and on side arenas, the question of Europe was put firmly in the background.

But although a focus on actors' interests helps us to get a better understanding of their choices, Moravcsik's theory is still insufficient to explain the Norwegian policy. This is clearly demonstrated by the reactions to the St. Malo agreement, and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Findings in this chapter

In this chapter I have tried to explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation by using Moravcsik’s theory of liberal intergovernmentalism. Underlying assumptions are that actors have clearly defined interests; that they are assessing costs and benefits in their protection of these interests; and that information is easily accessible and accurately interpreted.

In part 4.1, we have found that Norwegian actors had a very clear picture of their own interests in European security and defence policy. They regarded marginalisation to represent a main threat to Norwegian interests, and accordingly took several steps to try to limit this problem. In part 4.2, we have seen that Norwegian politicians pursued a policy of anti-marginalisation, which might be summed up by Norway using several channels as means to gain influence. This was portrayed as a clear strategy by the main political actors, and the focus on side arenas was explained with reference to Norwegian national interests. This is what we would expect, according to Moravcsik. His theory also invites us to study the different actors on the domestic level. In part 4.3, we found that the national interests coincided with actors’ self interest of avoiding another EU debate domestically.

There are hence elements of a deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation, as my first hypothesis suggests. There are also signs that some actors deliberately underplayed EU-related issues, as my second hypothesis suggests. But Moravcsik’s theory is still insufficient to fully explain the Norwegian policy. The proof comes with St. Malo. Norwegian actors changed their policy considerably from 1998 onwards. According to Moravcsik’s theory, these changes could be seen as a rational change of strategy, and an accurate response to changes at the EU level. Not surprisingly, the government portrayed the change of policy this way, arguing that it was based on rational and strategic considerations. Such an explanation does not seem plausible, of two main reasons. First, Norwegian actors seemed totally unprepared

for the rapid changes at the EU level. Second, the initial changes of policy can hardly be described as rational. On the contrary, the Norwegian government seemed to lack a clear idea of how they should respond to changes at the EU level.

These aspects cannot be explained by Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism. If it is true that actors were taken by surprise and acted rather randomly, Moravcsik's assumption of rationality does not seem to explain their responses. This strongly weakens the impression of a rational Norwegian strategy in the first period. Instead it indicates that the actors had not fully understood the challenge represented by EU defence cooperation. This is incompatible with Moravcsik's assumption that 'information and ideas (...) are plentiful and cheap'. He also argues that 'the range of potential agreements, national preferences, and institutional options can thus be assumed to be common knowledge among governments' (1998:61). The plan for closer EU defence cooperation, officially presented at St. Malo, was indeed no common knowledge among Norwegian actors. This implies that we have to consider using a different theoretical approach to explain why St. Malo could come as a surprise to Norwegian actors. To fully understand the Norwegian change of policy we need theories taking into account that actors are not necessarily well informed, and not always acting strategically. In the following I will therefore use perspectives from social constructivism.

5 NORWEGIAN CULTURE AND IDENTITY

‘People only accept change when they are faced with necessity,
and only recognize necessity when a crisis is upon them’
*Jean Monnet*⁵⁰

In chapter 4, I have tried to explain the Norwegian responses by using Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism. We have seen that Norwegian actors had a clear idea of their own and the national interests, and tried to act rationally in order to protect these. However, I have argued that Moravcsik’s theory is insufficient to fully explain the Norwegian policy, which is clearly demonstrated by the Franco-British St. Malo agreement in 1998.

After St. Malo, the Norwegian policy changed dramatically. Whereas Norwegian actors earlier had been sceptical, they now seemed to believe in further integration in European security and defence policy. And whereas they earlier focused on side-arenas, they now focused directly on the EU and the ESDP process. The government portrayed this as perfectly rational, but I have argued that this is misleading. Especially the transformation period seems hard to explain by rational choice. First, the initial policy changes seem rather random. Second, Norwegian actors seemed totally unprepared for the St. Malo agreement. If these claims hold, they cannot be fully explained by Moravcsik’s theory. Rational actors should not act randomly; well informed actors should not be surprised. This means that liberal intergovernmentalism is insufficient to explain the Norwegian policy in the aftermath of St. Malo, but also that it is insufficient to explain the Norwegian policy in the first period. If St. Malo came as such a big surprise, the actors must have been far less rational than Moravcsik’s theory assumes.

It seems necessary to rely on a different theoretical approach to explain this, and in the following I will rely on social constructivism. This chapter will be based on the approaches of Peter Katzenstein and Thomas Risse, set out in part

⁵⁰ Quoted in Dinan 1999:128.

2.3. In contrast to Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism, social constructivism is based on an assumption that people are not only acting strategically. Core concepts are norms, identity and culture. The key to understand Norwegian policy is then an understanding of the Norwegian foreign policy identity. The actors’ foreign policy identity is the independent variable, explaining the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. It is therefore necessary to explain what the Norwegian foreign policy identity consists of, and in what way it influences Norwegian policy. This will be discussed in part 5.1. In the last chapter we saw how the policy was explained with references to the national interest. Although interests might explain the need for an anti-marginalisation strategy, a focus on identity might help us to understand the contents of this strategy. Norwegian actors’ feeling of identity would determine what channels they found it natural to use in order to gain influence. With an understanding of the foreign policy identity we are hence in a better position to understand the Norwegian policy.

In part 5.2, I will further investigate how the Norwegian self conception influenced the responses to EU defence cooperation. An underlying assumption is that actors’ feeling of identity influences their opinions on Norway’s role in the world, and what the foreign and security policy could and should consist of. We would expect information to be interpreted through Norwegian cultural frames. While parts of reality are squeezed out, other parts are magnified (Kier 1996:202). This implies that the actors might have an inaccurate understanding of developments within the EU. This is not only due to insufficient information, but also due to their interpretation of the information they receive. To investigate this, I will test the third hypothesis that *Norwegian actors did not grasp the challenge represented by the EU’s changing role*. If the Norwegian policy reflected actors’ self conception, it will also imply that policy changes were bound to be difficult. The reason is that culture and identities are rather stable, and hard to change. According to Risse, we would expect change to be possible but time consuming. On this background I will test the hypothesis that *a particular conception of*

Norway’s role in European, transatlantic and Nordic relations can best explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation.

5.1 A particular conception of Norwegian foreign policy

A social constructivist approach suggests that we need an understanding of a country’s foreign policy identity in order to understand its foreign policy. The reason is that ‘(i)dentities both generate and shape interests. Some interests, such as mere survival and minimal physical well-being, exist outside of specific social identities; they are relatively generic. But many national security interests depend on a particular construction of self-identity in relation to the conceived identity of others’ (Jepperson et. al. 1996:60).

Tell me who your friends are...

As most small states, Norway is dependent on a good relationship with her friends and allies. Within the Norwegian self conception, there is a strong feeling of vulnerability, explained the following way by the ministry of foreign affairs.

‘In the outskirts of Europe lies Norway – a large, long and scarcely populated country. If we include the oceans, our area of jurisdiction is several times as big as the mainland. Faced with an attack from a great power, the Norwegian defence is therefore rather helpless’ (Ministry of foreign affairs 2004)⁵¹.

This feeling of vulnerability was enhanced by Norway’s geopolitical position, surrounded by stronger and larger countries. The last 700 years, Norwegian independence was the exception rather than the rule. Norway was a Danish colony for 400 years, and ruled by Sweden for almost 100 years. We have seen that Norwegian independence was based upon British interests, and that Norwegian neutralism was accompanied by an implicit ‘British guarantee’. The close

⁵¹ ‘I utkanten av Europa ligger Norge – et stort, langstrakt og tynt befolket land. Tar vi sjøområdene med, utgjør det området vi har myndighet over flere ganger selve landområdet. Mot angrep fra en stormakt er den norske militærmakten dermed temmelig hjelpeløs.’ (UDs skolesider, <http://www.odin.dep.no/ud/niv/>).

relationship to Britain never vanished, but after the Second World War, the relationship to the USA became even more important.

According to Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein, state identities were of particular importance during the polarisation of the Cold War, as countries often identified with the USA or the Soviet Union. In such a situation ‘(a)ctors often cannot decide what their interests are until they know what they are representing – “who they are” – which in turn depends on their social relationships’ (1996:60). During the Cold War, Norway was firmly tied to the western sphere through the NATO membership. Although security policy interests were the main reason to join NATO, the allies also shared a common view of how society should be organised. According to Risse, ‘(t)he Western democracies perceived a threat to their fundamental values resulting from the “Sovietization” of Eastern Europe. (...) NATO then institutionalised the transatlantic security community to cope with the threat. The multilateral nature of the organisation based on democratic principles and decision rules reflected the common values and the collective identity’ (1996:378).

The common values among the NATO members were always contrasted with the ones of the Soviet Union. Norway belonged to the western sphere of liberal democracies, as opposed to the eastern sphere of communism. This is reflected in Norwegian military plans during the Cold War. The armed forces existed to protect the Norwegian territory against one clearly defined enemy, the Soviet Union. This view was rather stable during the Cold War, and continued when the Cold War ended. As late as the mid-1990s, Neumann and Ulriksen found Norwegian defence plans to be quite similar to those made during the Cold War. The plans were based on defending the northern part of the country until allied assistance could be deployed. Norwegian security policy was hence based on traditional territorial defence and on NATO’s traditional role. ‘The only direct challenge identified in these plans is Russia’ (1995:80).

With the NATO membership, Norway was firmly tied to the western sphere. NATO was above all a transatlantic organisation, institutionalising cooperation between Western European states and the USA. The Norwegian NATO membership was primarily legitimised by Norway’s security interests, described in terms of national interests and strategies. There were, however, strong cultural ties, which also played a role.

‘The Norwegian “Atlanticism” was related to the strong ties to the UK. The British “special relationship” to the USA got its Norwegian counterpart. Geography played a role, and so did historical and contemporary ties to the USA: emigration, trade, American investments in Norway, Marshall help etc’ (Furre 1999:251)⁵².

Tamnes argues that hardly any European nation was so fascinated by American culture and American values as the Norwegian. In the political environment, there was a widespread support for NATO and the transatlantic link. The relationship between Norway and the USA became so close, that some even talked about an ‘alliance within the alliance’ (Tamnes 1997:69).

Fundamental changes from 1989 onwards had little influence on the Norwegian perception of primarily being an Atlantic country. On the contrary, this was seen as even more important in a period of flux. The importance of NATO was primarily linked to an upholding of the Atlantic community, clearly expressed by members of the Defence Commission: ‘NATO will remain the most important fundament to Norwegian security. Through NATO is our security and defence policy linked to our closest ally, the USA (...)’ (NOU 1992:12, pages 98-99)⁵³.

Within the Norwegian paradigm, USA continued to be the main actor providing European security and stability. Close European allies were therefore countries sharing our view on this issue, notably the Netherlands and Britain. The latter had a pivotal position in the Norwegian paradigm, as Britain held the key to

⁵² ‘Den norske “atlantismen” hang saman med dei sterke banda til Storbritannia. Det britiske “spesielle tilhøvet” til USA fekk sitt norske motstykke. Geografi spela ei rolle. Det same gjorde historiske og aktuelle band til USA: Utvandring, handel, amerikanske investeringar i norsk næringsliv, marshallhjelp o.a.’

⁵³ ‘NATO vil fortsatt utgjøre bærebjelken for norsk sikkerhet. Gjennom NATO er Norge forsvars- og sikkerhetspolitisk knyttet til vår primære sikkerhetsgarantist USA (...)’.

closer European defence cooperation. A precondition for credible European defence cooperation was participation by at least two of Europe's three biggest states. Whereas the French continuously had promoted the idea, the British were reluctant. To the latter, NATO primacy had been the main concern (Gordon 1997:112). And whereas the British were unwilling to cooperate, the Germans were unable: The legacy of the Second World War was clearly present in the German constitution, which limited the role of the Bundeswehr to collective territorial defence (Bluth 2000:55). Norwegian actors seemed to believe that the UK would continue to veto defence cooperation within the EU, in line with Norwegian preferences. There was a widespread view that 'the Britons won't let us down', and 'we can always trust the British'. This is confirmed by several of my interview sources. Norwegian actors seemed quite confident that the British would effectively veto French aspirations for autonomous European defence cooperation. This interpretation was an important part of the Norwegian paradigm. It was so strong that several signs of a changed British policy after 1997 went largely unnoticed. This will be further discussed in part 5.2.

By using a social constructivist approach we are hence in a better position to understand the Norwegian policy. Such an approach suggests that identities 'generate and shape interests', something that seems to be the case here. Norwegian actors identified with their British and American allies, and defined the national interests according to this. In fact, interests and identities seemed to be strongly overlapping. When Norwegian actors emphasised the Norwegian interest of NATO supremacy and a close Euro-Atlantic relationship, this was well embedded in their foreign policy culture. In the Norwegian paradigm, there was hardly any space for EU defence cooperation outside the NATO framework. Norwegian actors also took it for granted that the British would veto any such attempts within the EU.

Nordic cooperation and Norwegian identity

Within the Norwegian paradigm, Nordic cooperation was another cornerstone. As we have seen in part 4.2, Nordic cooperation was seen as important to protect Norwegian interests. Dybesland finds, however, that a focus on both self interests *and* identity is important to fully understand this cooperation (See Dybesland 2000). Nordic cooperation has deep roots, at least back to the 14th century when Norway, Sweden and Denmark had the same queen. ‘The Scandinavian languages; the Protestant religion and the common judicial tradition, the history of Vikings (...) have created the basis for a common Nordic identity’ (Tunander 1997:285)⁵⁴.

Different experiences during the Second World War led to different foreign policy preferences during the Cold War. Plans for a Nordic defence alliance collapsed in 1949, and attempts to create closer economic cooperation stranded due to the countries’ different interests. The neighbouring countries were, however, still able to cooperate in several other policy-areas. A common labour market was established in 1954, joint social security coverage in 1955 and an area of free passports from 1957 – before the European Economic Community was even founded. These ties and privileges had emotional importance in the population (Udgaard 1996:150). Norway, Sweden and Denmark also shared ownership of the Scandinavian Airline System (SAS). The Nordic cooperation was institutionalised with the establishment of the Nordic Council in 1952, which was seen as an important symbol of the Nordic cooperation (Eriksen and Pharo 1997:152).

According to Tunander, Nordic cooperation is characterised by mutual trust and informal cooperation. ‘The Nordic Council and later the Nordic Ministerial Council developed into a forum of formal, but especially informal, contacts among Nordic politicians. (...) Similar bounds were established in the bureaucracies.

⁵⁴ ‘De skandinaviske språkene, den protestantiske religionen og den felles rettstradisjonen, vikinghistorien, den førkristne mytologien og felles, men omstridte territorier som er blitt kontrollert av enten den ene eller den andre, har skapt grunnlaget for en felles nordisk identitet’.

These informal contacts constituted the core of Nordic cooperation’ (Tunander 1997:287).

Norwegian actors continuously expressed the importance of Nordic cooperation from 1990 onwards, and in this respect there were few changes in the two periods studied. In the early 1990s, the government hoped that all Nordic countries would become EU members. This was especially underlined after the Finnish and Swedish referendums. ‘The Nordic countries can be tied even closer together in a deeper and wider cooperation within the EU’ (White Paper No. 40, 1993-94, part 1.2.2). In the end, Sweden and Finland joined the union, while Norway remained outside. In such a situation, Norwegian policy-makers found it crucial to avoid a downgrading of Nordic cooperation. Norwegian actors often referred to Nordic identity and values to explain the importance of Nordic cooperation. ‘One can feel the Nordic attachment every time we cross Nordic borders without a passport. This is related to human contact, extensive trade and a large degree of common identity as well as cultural ties’ (Brundtland 1995)⁵⁵.

After Sweden and Finland joined the EU, an important task was to uphold the Nordic area of free passports. The Nordic countries worked collectively to achieve this, and succeeded, as Norway became a member of the Schengen area. The government argued that the incident exemplified the solidarity between the Nordic countries. The neighbouring countries would continue to work for important Nordic values within the EU, as ‘full employment, environment, gender equality, democracy and transparency’ (Godal 1997)⁵⁶. Similarly, the Nordic countries had a ‘tradition to stay together in the fight for democracy and human rights on the international stage’ (ibid).

⁵⁵ ‘Men den nordiske tilhørigheten er følbar, den uttrykker seg hver gang vi krysser nordiske grenser uten pass. Det har med menneskelige kontakter, utstrakt handel og stor grad av felles identitet og kulturell tilhørighet å gjøre’.

⁵⁶ ‘Vi har her et godt eksempel på at den nordiske dialogen om hovedspørsmål på regjeringskonferansen som drøfter endringer i EUs traktatverk, er viktig for Norge. Verdier som har bred oppslutning i Norden, som sysselsetting, miljø, likestilling, demokrati og åpenhet har stått sentralt (...)’.

All governments seemed to share an enthusiasm for Nordic cooperation, regardless of political affiliation. The prime minister Kjell Magne Bondevik presented it the following way: ‘The backbone of Nordic cooperation is the neighbourliness – trustful, peaceful and intimate’ (Bondevik 1999). The prime minister went quite far arguing that the Nordic countries at the time constituted a European leadership, as Finland led the EU presidency, Iceland chaired the Council of Europe and Norway the OSCE. ‘We have a lot in common – similar values and priorities. Separately, but even more collectively, we can contribute to international cooperation for peace, democracy, human rights and development’ (ibid)⁵⁷.

With such a strong emphasis on Nordic values it is quite understandable that Norwegian actors chose Nordic cooperation as a pivotal part of their anti-marginalisation strategy. To use the Nordic countries as a ‘bridge’ to the EU fitted quite nicely with the Norwegian foreign policy identity. This helps us to understand why the strong focus on Nordic cooperation continued, also after the St. Malo agreement. Although the Nordic channel seemed insufficient to deal with the challenge of St. Malo, it continued to be an important role of the Norwegian policy. ‘Regarding our relationship to Europe, we must not forget that Norway first and foremost is a Nordic country. It is therefore especially important to maintain the dialogue with Denmark, Finland and Sweden on the development within the EU and the development of the ESDP’ (Godal 2000).

Sceptical views on European integration

As we have seen, the Atlantic and the Nordic dimensions were important parts of the Norwegian foreign policy identity. Such cooperation had long traditions, and was deeply embedded in the Norwegian foreign policy culture. According to the Katzenstein/Risse perspective this to a large degree explains the continuous

⁵⁷ ‘Vi har mye felles i Norden – felles verdier og prioriteringer. Hver for oss, men enda mer i fellesskap, kan vi gi et bidrag til internasjonalt samarbeid for fred, demokrati, menneskerettigheter og utvikling’.

Norwegian focus on these areas. According to this perspective, we would accordingly assume policy-areas not embedded in the national culture to play a less significant role. This might be relevant to explain the Norwegian policy vis-à-vis the EU.

Since the independence, Norwegian actors seem to have kept continental Europe at an arm’s length. The foreign minister argued that Norwegian neutrality was an explicit way of keeping a distance to what he described as European warrior states (Berg 1995:53). There were, however, considerable continental impulses – especially from Germany. After 1905, German was the most commonly spoken foreign language, the Lutheran Church of Norway had strong ties to the Protestant churches in Germany, many Norwegian students attended German universities, and Norwegian universities operated predominantly with the German academic world. ‘This strange dichotomy of strong economic and political ties to Britain and equally strong cultural ties to Germany during prolonged periods of conflict between the two reinforced Norway’s inclination to keep out of international politics’ (Udgaard 1996:145).

After the Second World War, the situation changed fundamentally. German impulses decreased significantly, and were met with scepticism and hostility due to the war experiences. Simultaneously, the relationship to Britain and especially to the USA had become much closer during the war. This had important implications to Norwegian foreign policy identity, and to what has been characterised as three circles in Norwegian foreign policy. At the end of the Second World War, the priority list was ‘firstly Atlantic, then Nordic and lastly European cooperation (this last limited to economic and cultural affairs)’ (Udgaard 1996:143). Opinion polls confirmed the impression of a sceptical attitude to continental Europe. Of all West European parliamentarians, the Norwegian parliamentarians were the most sceptical to European integration (Røhne 1987:156). This is further documented by Pharo. He argues that the continent represented an unfamiliar and unattractive political culture; particularly when

Germany played an important part (1988:58). The idea of European warrior states still existed. ‘The Atlantic area was associated with peaceful economic cooperation and an automatic security guarantee. The European area was associated with instability and disagreements’ (Mjøset 1997:301).

Although Norwegian policy during the 1990s was not characterised by a hostile attitude to the continent, there are still signs of scepticism. Haakon Blankenborg finds a general tendency that Norwegian politicians were distancing themselves from European politics. ‘Generally we have not been fully aware of the changes after 1989. The fall of the wall was something we watched on TV. We have been observers to the changes in Europe, rather than participants’ (Interview 2004).

This is reflected in Norwegian security policy thinking. The defence minister argued that Norwegian security interests were quite different than those of continental states. ‘It is important that Washington accepts that challenges in Europe are varying, and that defence questions are quite different in Norway than on the continent. The credibility of the Norwegian territorial defence rests upon particular demands on allied activity’ (Kosmo 1995b)⁵⁸. This underlines the impression of Norway as primarily a transatlantic country, not completely identifying with the rest of Europe. This is directly reflected in the Norwegian view on burden sharing, which has American interests as the starting point: ‘It is in the American interest that the European countries collectively take a larger responsibility for security challenges’ (ibid). On this background the WEU could be used as an instrument for European cooperation – not independent of the USA, but as means of keeping American presence in Europe.

The Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) was interpreted in a similar way. The concept was developed at a time where the French relationship to NATO improved; and the French believed that the CJTF would facilitate autonomous

⁵⁸ ‘For Norge er det viktig at Washington ser at utfordringen i Europa er forskjellig, og at de forsvarsrelaterte spørsmål er ulike i Norge og på det europeiske kontinent. Troverdighet knyttet til det norske invasjonforsvaret stiller helt spesielle krav til alliert aktivitet’.

European military operations outside NATO (and US) control. Norway welcomed the French reconciliation with NATO, as it could further increase the Alliance’s central role in European security and defence policy (Kosmo 1996a)⁵⁹. The government saw the CJTF as a way of strengthening the European contribution *within* NATO. This was the Anglo-American interpretation of the CJTF. France, on the other hand, wanted a more profound role for the European states, and a decreased American role in Europe. The French were sceptical to the American hegemony within NATO, and wanted the European countries collectively to become as powerful as the USA (Rieker 1998:16)⁶⁰. The French views were hardly ever mentioned by the Norwegian actors. On the contrary, they argued that there was consensus on an ESDI within NATO, in order to preserve NATO supremacy in Europe (several examples are presented in part 4.1).

This is exactly what we would expect, according to Katzenstein and Risse. The national identity shape people’s perception and affect what they notice and how they interpret it. Parts of reality are squeezed out, other parts are magnified. Whereas Norwegian actors magnified the Anglo-American perspective, the French views seem to have been squeezed out. Norwegian actors not only shared the British and American view, in official descriptions this perspective is often portrayed as the only one. It was often stated that there was a broad consensus on this view, completely disregarding the French position.

In this part I have given an outline of the Norwegian foreign policy identity. Although cooperation with the USA and the Nordic countries officially was portrayed as a rational anti marginalisation strategy, we have seen that this is not the full explanation. As the Katzenstein/Risse perspective suggests, the Norwegian foreign policy identity to a large degree explains the emphasis on such cooperation. The social constructivist approach also underlines the importance of

⁵⁹ ‘Fra norsk side er det gledelig at Frankrike nå synes å legge store vekt på NATO. Ikke bare fordi Frankrike er en viktig europeisk alliert, men også fordi det øker sjansene for å komme frem til enhetlige og effektive sikkerhetsløsninger i Europa der NATO fortsetter å spille den sentrale rolle’.

⁶⁰ It is important to notice that France has not been against NATO as such. French criticism has been raised at the US hegemony within the alliance, and against the integrated military structures (Rieker 1998:63).

culture and norms. In the Norwegian case this implied a close relationship to the USA and UK, and a rather more distanced relationship to continental Europe. This was reflected in a sceptical attitude to EU defence cooperation, and also in a continuous focus on traditional issues as territorial defence and NATO supremacy. Within the Norwegian paradigm, NATO could, would and should remain the main security organisation, and the UK guaranteed a limited role for the EU in the area of security and defence. In fact, Norwegian actors felt much closer to Washington than to Brussels.

5.2 Not well-informed after all?

In the previous part, I have described the Norwegian culture of national security, to use Katzenstein’s words. In this part we will further investigate how this culture influenced the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. This is based on the social constructivist assumption that ‘(v)ariation in state identity, or changes in state identity, affect the national security interests or policies of states’ (Jepperson et al. 1996:60). We would then expect the Norwegian foreign policy identity to have an imperative impact on the Norwegian policy. Overall, the chapter tries to test the hypothesis that *a particular conception of Norway’s role in European, transatlantic and Nordic relations can best explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation.*

According to the social constructivist approach we would assume information to be interpreted through cultural lenses. As mentioned, parts of reality would be magnified while other parts would be squeezed out. This implies that Norwegian actors might not be fully informed at all times, and also that information might be inaccurately understood. This is quite different logic than the one of Moravcsik, who assumes ‘information to be plentiful and cheap’ and accordingly that governments would be well aware of developments at the international stage. In line with this, I will test the hypothesis that *Norwegian actors did not grasp the challenge represented by the EU’s changing role.* Within

the social constructivist perspective, this is the key to understand why St. Malo could come as a surprise to Norwegian actors. The agreement then reflected processes going on for some time, which Norwegian actors had not seen nor appreciated. This, in turn, would explain why the political changes post St. Malo were characterised by uncertainty and confusion.

A focus on diversity

Generally, Norwegian actors seem to have focused on the different interests among EU member states. This tendency is evident in the report of the Defence Commission, in which the background of the WEU was discussed. The commission especially focused on the different interpretations of what the organisation could and should be. ‘EU countries have disagreed on whether or not defence should be part of EU cooperation. The leading EU countries France and Germany suggested (...) a common foreign and security policy. Several members were sceptical.’ (NOU 1992:12, part 4)⁶¹. The Defence Commission especially underlined British scepticism to any kind of defence cooperation which might undermine NATO.

The defence minister also stressed the differences between the EU countries. On this basis, he predicted internal differences to become an increasing problem for the member states:

‘We have all reasons to believe that the development within the EU and the WEU will not be dominated by complete harmony and agreement on all issues. On the contrary, we might expect diverging national interests among the member states to become increasingly more dominating as cooperation is extended and the number of members are increasing’ (Kosmo 1995a)⁶².

⁶¹ ‘EF-land har vært til dels uenige om hvorvidt forsvarspolitikken bør inngå i EF-samarbeidet. De ledende EF-land Frankrike og Tyskland foreslo i perioden 1989-91 at man burde innføre en felles utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk i EF. Flere medlemsland var skeptiske’.

⁶² ‘Det er all grunn til å regne med at utviklingen innen EU og VEU heller ikke vil være preget av fullkommen harmoni og enighet på alle punkter. Tvert imot kan vi anta at motstridende nasjonale synspunkter blant medlemslandene vil bli mer framtreddende etterhvert som samarbeidet griper om seg medlemstallet øker’.

His focus on internal differences underlined a scepticism that the WEU would ever become an important security organisation. This is in line with a view that the WEU would remain the European pillar within NATO, which was the Anglo-American understanding of what European defence cooperation could and should be. The fact that the WEU also was an EU foreign policy instrument was largely ignored. The Norwegian ambassador to NATO and the WEU shared a similar scepticism as the defence minister.

‘Based on my experiences from the Western European Union, I am in doubt that it will ever be used to operations relevant to its operative competences. (...) Until the EU is capable of conducting an efficient foreign- and security policy, it is unlikely that the WEU will take on a meaningful mission’ (Mevik 1999:71)⁶³.

Mevik further expressed doubts that the EU would ever be able to agree on a meaningful CFSP. He found the EU countries’ willingness to act unilaterally to demonstrate the limits of the CFSP⁶⁴.

An underestimation of the WEU is documented by Nina Græger, who finds that the majority of Norwegian politicians, diplomats and military representatives never took the WEU seriously. ‘On several occasions I personally met with and interviewed Norwegian military representatives to NATO and the WEU who either disregarded the WEU in military affairs or who ridiculed the organisation, letting it known that they considered it a nuisance to have to attend the meetings on behalf of Norway’ (Græger 2002:77).

Haakon Blankenborg finds the underestimation of the EU to be a continuous problem in Norwegian politics. ‘We have always been underestimating EU foreign policy cooperation. There has been a widespread belief that the member states will never succeed in their efforts. In the area of defence policy,

⁶³ ‘Basert på mine erfaringer fra Vestunionen er jeg imidlertid i tvil om den noensinne vil bli benyttet til operasjoner som er relevante i forhold til organisasjonens operative evne. (...) (F)ør EU makter å føre en effektiv felles utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk, er det ikke særlig sannsynlig at Vestunionen vil påta seg en meningsfylt oppgave’.

⁶⁴ ‘Spørsmålet er imidlertid: vil EU makte å få til en beslutningsdyktig sikkerhetspolitikk? Gitt EUs begredelige erfaringer når det gjelder å opptre enhetlig på dette området, er det mitt personlige syn at EU vil få betydelige vanskeligheter med å føre en felles utenriks- og sikkerhetspolitikk’ (Mevik 1999:98).

several Norwegian actors have also hoped that the EU would fail’ (Interview 2004). According to Blankenborg, the descriptive considerations then overlapped with normative considerations. The result was that Norwegian actors were not paying enough attention to EU politics, and that EU issues had to be handled ad hoc. ‘When it turned out that the EU had been able to agree on substantial reforms after all, we were usually not prepared for this. In these situations there was always a need to work quickly and hardly, in order to protect Norwegian interests’ (ibid).

This is largely in line with social constructivist assumptions. According to this perspective we would expect Norwegian policy to be influenced by the culture embedded within the foreign policy elite. In part 5.1, we saw how Norwegian actors felt close to their Nordic and transatlantic partners, while they felt far more distanced to continental Europe. This seems to have strongly influenced their relationship to EU cooperation. First, they hoped and thought that further integration in EU defence cooperation would not take place. Second, they had an inaccurate understanding of EU cooperation, with a strong focus on diversity among the EU members. Third, they were simply not paying enough attention to EU policy. Instead, the politicians focused on side-arenas in European security and defence policy and underlined the traditional importance of NATO.

Unnoticed changes in British policy

Above all, Norwegian actors underestimated important changes in British politics. In part 5.1, we saw how Norwegian actors expected the British to effectively veto plans for closer defence cooperation within the EU. Within the Norwegian paradigm, the British way led to Washington. On the basis of such a ‘British guarantee’, most Norwegian actors doubted that autonomous European defence cooperation would emerge outside the NATO framework. They were quite

satisfied with the EU as ‘an economic giant, political dwarf and military worm’⁶⁵. Until the St. Malo agreement the Norwegian government also seemed to believe that the EU’s military role would remain limited. A White Paper published in February 1998 gives a quite clear analysis, with a direct reference to the proposal of incorporating the WEU into the EU. Such a development was simply regarded ‘unlikely in a short or medium term’ (White Paper no. 22, 1997-98, part 3)⁶⁶.

There were several reasons to draw such a conclusion, according to the Ministry of Defence. First, an EU-led operation would have to be based on NATO resources, primarily American resources. The ministry assumed it to be unlikely that the USA would accept this, as several EU-countries were not NATO members. (The CJTF agreement was not even mentioned in this respect). Second, it would be problematic to transfer an Article 5-obligation to the EU, as it would imply that non-NATO members were included in a collective security guarantee. According to the ministry, such a development would also complicate an EU enlargement. Third, the ministry found the outcome of the Amsterdam intergovernmental conference to strengthen the impression that the WEU would not become part of the EU.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to see that the conclusions were completely wrong. What is more interesting, however, is the continued tendency of underlining difficulties in EU cooperation. The limits to EU cooperation are stressed, and the possibilities are hardly mentioned. This is what we would expect, according to social constructivism. We have seen that the Norwegian foreign policy identity consisted of a close relationship to the USA and to the Nordic countries, and a distanced relationship to continental Europe. On this background it is easy to understand that Norwegian actors had an inaccurate understanding of EU cooperation. They seemed to have little understanding of what Wallace

⁶⁵ As Belgium’s foreign minister described it. Quoted in Anderson 1998:134.

⁶⁶ ‘Utfra ønsket om å styrke EUs rolle i europeisk krisehåndtering har flere EU-land tatt til orde for en gradvis integrering av VEU i EU med påfølgende nedleggelse av VEU som organisasjon. En slik utvikling er imidlertid lite sannsynlig på kort og mellomlang sikt’.

characterises as ‘the dynamics of European integration’ (1991); an underlying common interest driving the integration process forward. Instead, Norwegian actors focused on the different interests among the EU members, and accordingly on the obstacles to further integration. Again it seems as the descriptive considerations were influenced by the normative ones. There is little doubt that the ministry’s analysis would be in line with Norwegian actors’ interests, as described in chapter 4.

Generally it seems that Norwegian actors were underestimating EU defence cooperation and consequentially also its implications for Norway. This impression is further increased by the prime minister’s speech on the government’s policy for Europe in April 1998. The WEU is only mentioned in five sentences, and its possible incorporation in the EU is not mentioned at all. Instead the prime minister spends quite some time underlining the importance of the OSCE, which should be chaired by Norway the following year (Bondevik 1998).

Three months before St. Malo there are still no signs that the government had recognised signals of a changed role for the WEU. ‘Last year, the WEU has worked to strengthen its relationship to NATO and to the EU. To Norway it is important that the WEU continues as an independent organisation, with a balanced relationship to both NATO and the EU’ (Government proposal no 1, 1998-99, part 2.3.2)⁶⁷.

There are hence signs that Norwegian actors were unaware of the changes going on in the EU; and especially the changes in British politics. Britain held the key to closer European defence cooperation, and had done so for decades. The UK would decide if there should be a credible European defence cooperation, and also on what terms. From a Norwegian point of view, there were hence good reasons to study British politics closely. It seems, however, that Norwegian actors overlooked several signs of a changed British EU policy after Tony Blair took

⁶⁷ ‘VEU har det siste året arbeidet med å styrke sitt forhold til NATO og EU. For Norge er det viktig å vektlegge betydningen av at VEU fortsatt utvikler seg som en selvstendig organisasjon med noenlunde balanserte forbindelser til både NATO og EU’.

office in 1997. The Blair government quite quickly took a number of steps to reform the policy of the ‘awkward partner’⁶⁸.

The government started by abolishing the British ‘opt-out’ from the Social Protocol in the Treaty on European Union (TEU). The Social Protocol could finally be brought into the Treaty of Amsterdam (ToA). On defence matters, the British accepted to go a small step further in the ToA. ‘The European Council could now “avail itself” of WEU action, rather than the slightly weaker “request” contained in the TEU. Links between the two organisations could be developed further, with the possibility of a merger “should the European Council so decide”’ (Forster and Wallace 2000:483). The Franco-British relationship had also improved during the 1990s, with France moving closer to NATO. During military operations in the Balkans, Franco-British cooperation had bloomed while the UK’s special relationship to the USA had been tested (See Lucarelli 2000:61, Anderson 1998:140, Neville-Jones 1996:47). The Kosovo crisis all too well revealed the shortcomings of European defence capabilities⁶⁹.

The British reorientation had hence been developing all since Tony Blair took office in May 1997, and the process accelerated when NATO operations against Serbia started. A diplomat in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) wrote a confidential memorandum on the issue in May 1998. The memorandum discussed the question of building a European defence capability within NATO, but in a way that made Europe able to act independently in the defence field (Whitman 1999:6).

⁶⁸ The expression used by George 1998.

⁶⁹ Tony Blair underlined the mantra that ‘European governments spent two-thirds as much as the Americans on defence, but could deploy only 10 percent as many troops’ (Forster and Wallace 2000:485). The American technology superiority was demonstrated during the Kosovo war, but the impression of US hegemony should be moderated somewhat. ‘Despite continued complaints about “free riders”, European NATO countries provide 90 percent of the manpower, 85 percent of the tanks, 95 percent of the artillery and 85 percent of the combat airpower’ (Sharp quoted in Yost 2000:101). But there is a danger that a division of labour develops, in which the Europeans ‘find themselves increasingly responsible for manpower-intensive operations with a high risk of casualties, while the Americans would carry out the high-technology lower-risk stand-off precision attacks and intelligence functions’ (Yost 2000:110-111).

From October 1998 onwards, Tony Blair quite strongly insisted that the WEU should be integrated into the EU. During the informal EU summit in Pörtschach in Austria there were raised several suggestions for closer EU defence cooperation. The meeting represented a milestone in itself, being the first summit in which EU defence ministers met to discuss EU security and defence policy. Blair explicitly repeated his wish for an integration of the WEU into the EU, but no decisions were taken. Few Norwegian actors seemed to take notice, and with a couple of exceptions the summit was not even mentioned in the Norwegian media.

We have seen that Norwegian actors believed EU defence cooperation would not materialise, and that the government strongly underlined this. The government’s argumentation is completely in line with the Norwegian state identity: NATO could, should and would remain the main security organisation, the EU would continue as a civilian power, and the UK would support such a development. This is not to say that Norwegian actors were completely unaware of the development of EU defence cooperation, but this was interpreted through Norwegian cultural frames. As Norway shared the Anglo-American view on burden sharing, EU defence cooperation was seen as a way of strengthening NATO. In other words, the WEU was only regarded as part of the ESDI (several examples are presented in part 4.1). This means that Norwegian actors were informed, but still had an inaccurate understanding of EU developments.

According to Katzenstein and Risse’s theory this is exactly what we should expect, as state identity influences what actors see and how they interpret it. Furthermore, we would expect Norwegian actors to be focused on policy-areas well embedded within their foreign policy identity. Also this assumption is largely confirmed. As we have seen, Norwegian actors were to a large extent stuck within a traditional paradigm, in which the main task was an upholding of the territorial defence. In such a situation, the main challenge was the one of marginalisation. Within such a paradigm it was imperative that NATO remained the main security organisation; that collective defence remained the main task, and that important

allies continued to focus on the Russian threat. In such a paradigm, there was hardly any space for EU defence cooperation outside the NATO framework.

With a social constructivist approach it is hence easy to understand why Norwegian actors were underestimating EU defence cooperation. We have seen that they had not understood the changes in British politics, and it therefore seems quite plausible that the St. Malo agreement came as a surprise. The agreement was no less than ‘a diplomatic bombshell’, and hence impossible to overlook. Suddenly, EU defence policy was a much debated issue in Norwegian media. The immediate reactions among Norwegian politicians strengthen the impression of shock and surprise. The defence minister’s announcement that he considered changing his opinion on Norwegian EU membership came almost overnight, and cabinet members seemed totally unprepared for this. Bjørn Tore Godal, later to become defence minister, stated that Britain was ‘sliding away’ (Aftenposten 1998b). The leader of the Labour Party, Thorbjørn Jagland, argued that the developments necessitated another debate on Norway’s relationship to the EU. One participant puts it this way.

‘St. Malo came as a surprise to the employees in the Ministry of foreign affair. We were surprised of the British position, as the UK had earlier resisted similar suggestions by the French and the Germans. It turned out that we had underestimated the British change of strategy under the Blair government’ (Interview 2004).

That there had been an underestimation of EU defence cooperation is partly confirmed by Dag Jostein Fjærvoll. ‘We had received signals of a changing attitude from the UK, which in time could lead to a European alliance independent of the USA. We were not surprised of the St. Malo agreement as such, but the cooperation went further than we had expected’ (Interview 2003). His successor also admits that ‘there was not a widespread belief that the EU would integrate quickly in security and defence affairs’ (Interview Løwer 2003). The former leader of the Defence Committee found the St. Malo agreement a big surprise. ‘Several

of us did not understand anything of the British government, which seemed to embrace the suggestion wholeheartedly. I had contact with politicians in British Labour, who were as surprised as us’ (Interview Røsjorde 2003).

Whereas the MoD had earlier assumed an incorporation of the WEU into the EU to be ‘unlikely in a short or medium term’, the conclusion was now the complete opposite. ‘The WEU will probably be abolished as an organisation in the short or medium term’ (White Paper no. 38, 1998-99, part 3.2.4)⁷⁰. The background for such a development was also analysed, and this time the focus had changed fundamentally: The MoD pointed at Europe’s lack of capabilities in crisis management, which had been revealed in Kosovo. It was pointed out that there was a widespread frustration among leading EU countries, and a strong wish for a more autonomous role in European security policy. ‘It is primarily on this background one must evaluate the Franco-British St. Malo agreement of December 1998, which underlined the need for closer European defence cooperation in EU, and the possibility of integrating the entire or parts of the WEU into the EU’ (ibid).

It is hence quite clear that Norwegian actors had underestimated changes within the EU, as my third hypothesis suggests. First, they had insufficient information about developments within the EU. Second, the Norwegian foreign policy identity strongly influenced the way information was interpreted, which in turn resulted in an inaccurate understanding of developments. This is the main explanation why St. Malo came as a surprise to the Norwegian actors. The findings are hence in line with my fourth hypothesis, that a particular conception of Norway’s role in European, transatlantic and Nordic relations can best explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. This further indicates that Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism is insufficient, and that a social

⁷⁰ ‘Et sannsynlig utviklingsmønster er at VEU som organisasjon nedlegges på kort eller mellomlang sikt. I så fall vil EU trolig overta de overordnede politiske styringsfunksjoner som i dag tillegges VEU (...)’.

constructivist perspective is necessary to explain the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation.

From 1998 onwards

The theory of Katzenstein and Risse also explains the uncertainty and confusion from 1998 onwards. We have seen that the Norwegian policy in the first period largely was in line with actors’ foreign policy identity. When the policy-makers were forced to increasingly focus on the EU directly, this went contrary to the traditional state identity. From a social constructivist perspective, we would therefore expect the changes to be a painful learning process.

The initial policy changes were not characterised by rationality and strategy. Instead, they seem rather random, as Norwegian actors tried to understand what had happened within the EU. The Foreign Ministry initial response was to send a ‘scout’ to London and Paris, simply to find out what was going on. The defence minister argued that the world had changed fundamentally, but seemed to lack a clear idea of how to deal with it. He pointed at traditional Norwegian anti-marginalisation policy: The use of the OSCE and Nordic cooperation to gain influence, the continued emphasis on the bilateral relationship to the USA, and also a ‘very active participation in relevant forums, in NATO and WEU (...)’ (Fjærvoll 1999b)⁷¹. In his statement on the government’s European policy, the foreign minister also touched upon the issue. Again, the impression of uncertainty is enhanced, as the St. Malo declaration had ‘left a number of difficult questions unanswered. Relations with Allied non-EU members like Norway are touched on but without any clear indication of how they are to be dealt with’ (Vollebæk 1999a). According to the minister, there were three options. First, the WEU could become part of the EU. Second, the various elements of WEU cooperation could be split between the EU and NATO. And third, the WEU could

⁷¹ ‘Bare gjennom en meget aktiv deltagelse i relevante fora, i NATO og VEU, kan vi bidra til å sikre at våre interesser ivaretas.

continue as an independent organisation. Later, the government concluded that the first solution was the most likely outcome (White Paper 51, 1998-99, part 2.5).

The government underlined the importance of a continued Norwegian participation in European crisis management operations. ‘The Government’s point of departure is therefore that Norway’s right as an Ally, and as an associate member of the WEU, must be maintained in the future solutions that may change the cooperation between the EU, the WEU and NATO’ (Vollebæk 1999a). The Norwegian preference was that a possible integration of the WEU into the EU should not weaken non-EU countries’ participation and influence (White Paper 51, 1998-99, part 2.5)⁷². In other words, the government hoped to gain the same influence in the ESDP as it had enjoyed in the WEU. ‘Our ambition is Norwegian participation in ongoing consultations about peacekeeping operations by the EU. It is not sufficient to participate *after* a decision of an EU-led Petersberg operation is taken’ (Vollebæk 1999b)⁷³.

The government took a rather unprecedented step in sending a PM to all EU and NATO countries, prior to the European Council in Helsinki⁷⁴. The government had three suggestions: First, day-to-day consultations and activities relating to security and defence issues should take place in a format of EU members and European NATO states. Non-EU European allies would have the right to speak and make proposals, and access to all the relevant information and documents. Second, non-EU European allies should be invited at an early stage to take part in EU operations not drawing on NATO assets and capabilities. Once their participation in an operation was confirmed, non-EU European allies would have the same rights in respects of the preparation and conduct of the operation as participating EU member states. Third, the non-EU European allies should meet

⁷² ‘Det ble fra norsk side understreket av eventuelle endringer når det gjaldt WEU ikke måtte svekke den muligheten for deltakelse og innflytelse de europeiske allierte land utenfor EU nå hadde’.

⁷³ ‘Vår ambisjon er norsk deltakelse i de løpende konsultasjonene om fredsoperasjoner i EU-regi i fremtiden. Det er ikke nok å komme inn i prosessen først etter at et vedtak om en EU-ledet Petersberg-operasjon er fattet.’

⁷⁴ The entire PM is published on the website of the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, www.dnak.org.

their EU counterparts at political level, including ministers of defence as appropriate, to discuss European security and confirm participation in EU-led operations.

These suggestions were quite radical and would in practice give Norway the same rights as EU members. The Norwegian attempt to ‘join without joining’ was not welcomed by the EU countries, and can be interpreted as a sign that the government misjudged policy processes within the union. ‘The policy expressed in the PM can only be judged as extremely optimistic, or naïve, at worst’ (Græger 2002:44). The foreign minister, Mr. Knut Vollebæk, also admitted that the result of the Helsinki European Council had been disappointing from his point of view (Aftenposten 1999).

After the Helsinki European Council, the Norwegian policy is characterised by a larger degree of realism. The government toned down its wishes for formal links to the ESDP. Instead there was an increased focus on influence through contribution of troops. ‘Instead of insisting on formal participation, there is now a focus on participation in real-life operations. When we participate in developments of weapon systems and military operations, we are drawn closer to the processes. This way, we are also in a better position to influence developments’ (Interview MoD employee 2003).

The government seemed to have accepted that EU defence cooperation would not remain limited. Norwegian policy-makers also seemed to have a more realistic view on what Norway could obtain as a non-member. ‘It has been strong reluctance among the EU members to continue the WEU arrangements. It is underlined that the WEU has not worked as intended, and that the EU is quite different than the WEU. As a non-member we will just have to accept this’ (Jagland 2000)⁷⁵. The foreign minister further underlined the limits of Norwegian influence by stressing the EU’s rights of autonomous decision-making. The latter

⁷⁵ ‘Det har vært sterk motstand fra EUs medlemsland til å videreføre VEU-ordningene. Det påpekes at VEU ikke har fungert etter intensjonene og at EU som institusjon er vesensforskjellig fra Vestunionen. Dette er noe vi som ikke er medlem i EU må ta til etterretning’.

represented a clear shift in policy, as the government had almost tried to dictate the EU less than a year before. In the PM the government demanded that Norwegian participation ‘must be upheld and the current rights preserved’. Now, the government found it evident that non-members ‘cannot have the same association as full members’ (Jagland 2000).

There has also been a gradual change of the normative considerations of EU defence cooperation. Instead of regarding EU defence cooperation as opposed to Norwegian interests, there has been an acceptance that participation in such operations might be in our interest. In the first period, there was a widespread scepticism to international operations, as they could take the focus away from the task of territorial defence. This changed from 1998 onwards. Instead of regarding international operations as a supplement to territorial defence, the defence minister argued that participation in international operations strengthened the national defence. (Løwer 1999). Rieker hence finds the ESDP to have increased the Norwegian focus on out-of-area operations (2003a:241). Despite considerable opposition, ‘we may note a development towards greater acceptance of the EU as an important security actor, and towards a stronger focus on international crisis management among the political elites’ (Rieker 2003b:236).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to explain the Norwegian policy by using the theory of Katzenstein and Risse. According to their theory, we would expect actors’ foreign policy identity to influence their actions. I have therefore given an outline of this identity, and tried to explain how it influences Norwegian policy. The identity influences the way actors receive information, and might result in an inaccurately interpretation of it.

We have seen that Norwegian actors felt a certain distance to the integration process within the EU, and that they did not understand (or at least strongly underestimated) what has been described as the dynamics of European

integration. A major reason was the continued focus on internal differences between the EU members, which in turn underlined the difficulties in the integration process. Especially before the St. Malo summit, there was a widespread view that independent EU defence cooperation would never emerge. The third hypothesis therefore seems to have been strengthened. St. Malo came as a real surprise to Norwegian actors, indicating that they had not grasped the challenge represented by EU defence cooperation. We have seen that a focus on the Norwegian foreign policy identity seems necessary to explain this, as my fourth hypothesis suggests. Throughout the entire chapter I have shown that Moracsik's liberal intergovernmentalism must be supplemented by the theory of Katzenstein and Risse, to fully explain the Norwegian policy.

6 CONCLUSION

‘If NATO, the military arm of the transatlantic alliance, had not existed
in the post-September 11th world, would anyone be seeking to reinvent it?
Not in its present form, it has to be said’
*The Economist*⁷⁶

In this thesis I have dealt with Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. I have argued that the Norwegian responses are characterised by two distinct phases, with the Franco-British St. Malo agreement as a turning point.

In the first phase from 1994 to 1998, Norwegian actors were rather preoccupied with traditional issues as territorial defence and NATO supremacy. The two were closely interlinked, as Norwegian territorial defence totally depended on the security guarantee provided by NATO. In the eyes of Norwegian actors, Russia continued to be the main enemy – also after the end of the Cold War. Until 1998, there are few signs of a changed attitude among Norwegian actors. They were to a large extent stuck within a Cold War paradigm.

This was further reflected in their attitude to the EU. During the Cold War, the EC hardly had any role at all in European security and defence policy. Despite some attempts to cooperate in foreign policy more generally, the EC’s role remained marginal. After the Cold War this changed fundamentally as the EU members extended and deepened their foreign policy cooperation. Norwegian actors, however, expressed a deep scepticism to EU security and defence policy. Norwegian actors strongly disliked further integration in this area, and also doubted the possibilities for increased defence cooperation within the EU.

Whereas Norwegian actors continued to keep continental Europe at an arm’s length, they seemed increasingly preoccupied with side-arenas in European security and defence policy. They strongly emphasised Nordic cooperation as a way of compensating for Norway’s non-membership in the EU, and even tried to

⁷⁶ Economist 2002:13.

use the OSCE this way. Norwegian policy-makers also put great emphasis on a good bilateral cooperation to the USA.

After the Franco-British St. Malo summit in 1998, the Norwegian policy changed considerably. I have argued that the initial changes of policy were characterised by uncertainty and confusion. Norwegian actors seemed to be unprepared for the rapid changes on the European level, and did not seem to know how to react to them. The initiatives taken were rather random and Norwegian policy-makers quite strongly misjudged policy processes within the EU.

More generally, the second period is characterised by a much more proactive attitude to EU defence cooperation. Although side-arenas continued to be an important part of Norwegian anti-marginalisation policy, there was an increased focus on the ESDP. Norwegian actors started to understand that such cooperation would emerge, and toned down their scepticism. Whereas they earlier had been underlining the difficulties in EU cooperation, there was now an underlining of the possibilities. These changes of attitude took place at a time with decreased focus on traditional issues in Norwegian security and defence policy. Although the focus on territorial defence continued, this was no longer seen as opposed to participation in international military operations. On the contrary, participation in such operations was regarded as important to get experience from real-life operations.

How can we explain the Norwegian policy?

My task has been to explain the Norwegian policy in the two periods, and also the change of political course in 1998. In doing so, I have used Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism and also the perspectives of Katzenstein and Risse. I wanted to investigate the claim that both approaches are necessary to fully explain the Norwegian policy.

With Moravcsik’s theory as a starting point, we would expect Norwegian actors to be acting strategically and rationally. We would also expect them to be

well informed of developments at the EU level. On this background, I developed two hypotheses that have been tested in the thesis. First, that *the Norwegian responses were result of a deliberate strategy, aimed at limiting the negative consequences of EU defence cooperation*. Second, that *Norwegian actors deliberately underplayed issues that might lead to another EU-debate, including possible EU defence cooperation*.

The latter hypothesis is discussed in part 4.3, and is to a large degree confirmed. I have shown that some Norwegian actors had a very clear interest in avoiding another EU debate domestically. After the EU referendum in 1994, the question of Norwegian membership became a trauma to the policy-makers. The question was difficult to most political parties, which had both eurosceptics and euro-enthusiasts within their ranks. In addition, a re-emergence of the EU issue could be an obstacle to government formations. In this situation several parties found the EU issue a threat to internal unity, political power and also vote-seeking. Policy seeking therefore lost the trade-off.

This had clear consequences to the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. I have shown that some political actors worried that developments within the EU would lead to an increased marginalisation of Norway. As this in turn could lead to another Norwegian EU debate, several political actors toned down the question – as the second hypothesis suggests.

Norwegian actors hence focused on other ways to limit the problem of marginalisation. In part 4.2, we have seen that Norwegian politicians pursued a policy that might be summed up by Norway using several channels as means to gain influence. Nordic cooperation, the bilateral relationship to the USA and even the OSCE were parts of this policy. Officially, this policy was explained with reference to the national interest. However, I have argued that this picture is misleading, and hence that Moravcsik’s theory is insufficient to explain Norwegian policy. The responses to St. Malo shows this quite clearly, as

Norwegian actors were taken completely by surprise and initially acted rather randomly. In fact, they seemed to lack a clear idea of how they should respond.

This is not what we would expect according to liberal intergovernmentalism. Although there were elements of an anti-marginalisation strategy in the first period, the responses to St. Malo strongly weakens the first hypothesis. Actors can simply not have been as rational and well informed as we would expect according to liberal intergovernmentalism.

I have therefore used social constructivist perspectives, in order to explain the Norwegian policy. I have tested the hypotheses that *Norwegian actors did not grasp the challenge represented by the EU’s changing role*, and that *a particular conception of Norway’s role in European, transatlantic and Nordic relations can best explain Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation* (my third and fourth hypothesis respectively).

I have shown that a focus on the Norwegian foreign policy identity is useful to understand the policy. Norwegian actors felt close to the UK and the USA, especially in the area of security and defence. They also felt close to the Nordic neighbours, while they had a more distanced relationship to continental Europe. Within the Norwegian paradigm, NATO would continue as the main security organisation in Europe, and the British would continue to work for such a development. The ‘British way’ led to Washington. According to Katzenstein and Risse’s approach, we would expect such a paradigm to strongly influence the Norwegian policy. To a large degree, this is exactly what we find. We have seen that Norwegian policy in the first period was largely in line with the actors’ foreign policy identity. The actors showed a deep scepticism to EU defence cooperation, they focused on NATO’s traditional role, and also on side-arenas in European security and defence policy.

The Norwegian paradigm was fundamentally challenged at St. Malo, as the ‘British way’ suddenly went to Brussels. The Brits not only allowed defence cooperation within the EU, they even promoted it. Norwegian actors were taken

completely by surprise, and were forced to change their policy. This was a rather painful process, and the political changes were characterised by uncertainty and confusion.

A social constructivist approach is quite useful in explaining this. According to Katzenstein and Risse, we would expect the Norwegian foreign policy identity to influence the way information is interpreted and understood. The distanced relationship to continental Europe and the focus on NATO supremacy had led to an inaccurate understanding of EU policies. We have also seen that actors’ descriptive considerations were influenced by their normative considerations. St. Malo hence represented a development, which Norwegian actors had not accurately interpreted. This explains why they were taken completely by surprise. This is in line with the third hypothesis, which hence is largely confirmed.

A social constructivist approach is further useful in explaining the uncertainty and confusion when the Norwegian policy was changed. Norwegian policy-makers were forced to change their views on EU defence cooperation, and increasingly had to focus directly on the ESDP. Such a policy was not in line with their foreign policy identity, and this explains why the changes were difficult. Katzenstein suggests that national policy is rather stable and hard to change. Risse underlines that change is possible, but time-consuming and difficult. Both assumptions fit quite well with the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. The fourth hypothesis is hence strongly strengthened.

Final remarks

Foreign affairs is a policy area which often is associated with concepts as strategy and rationalism. In the first chapter, I argued that Norway’s relationship to the ESDP might be seen as a critical test to whether or not a rationalistic perspective is sufficient to explain foreign policy. I have found that Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism is insufficient to explain the Norwegian policy. Only with

an understanding of the foreign policy identity we are able to fully explain the Norwegian responses to EU defence cooperation. Only this way can we understand the strong emphasis on NATO, on the transatlantic relationship and on Nordic cooperation. Similarly, the distanced relationship to continental Europe explains why EU policies were inaccurately interpreted, which in turn explains why St. Malo came as a surprise. This suggests that social constructivism has much to offer to the study of foreign policy. The importance of culture, norms and identity should be stressed to a larger degree than has been the case so far.

Empirically, this thesis has shown that some aspects of Norwegian foreign policy has changed remarkably little the last hundred years. The Norwegian wish to ‘join without joining, or vice versa’ is indeed demonstrated by the Norwegian policy vis-à-vis the EU. Formally, Norway is not an EU member. The population has rejected Norwegian membership twice, but Norway still participates in a number of EU policies. This situation is further complicated by the sensitivity of the issue domestically. We have seen that ‘the question of Europe’ is one of the most sensitive questions in contemporary Norwegian history. The question has been difficult to most Norwegian parties and governments in the period studied.

This is a quite peculiar situation with few parallels internationally. It is crucial to understand this, in order to explain Norwegian EU policy. In the thesis I have tried to supplement existing studies by discussing this explicitly. I have found actors’ fear of another EU debate to be an important explanatory factor for Norwegian foreign policy. The thesis hence shows the continued relevance of Putnam’s argument that domestic politics should not be ignored in the study of foreign policy.

Overall, the thesis supports the view that a combination of liberal intergovernmentalism and social constructivism gives the best understanding of Norwegian foreign policy. As mentioned in chapter 2, I do not regard the two approaches as mutually exclusive. I have argued that the two latter hypotheses have been strengthened; but also found evidence supporting the second

hypothesis. This indicates that we cannot fully explain Norwegian policy with either perspective: People are not *only* according to norms and identity. Nor are they *only* acting according to a calculation of costs and benefits. The importance of either perspective varies over time, and from actor to actor. It seems like the search for an anti-marginalisation strategy was especially high on the agenda in the immediate aftermath of the EU referendum. The fear of another EU debate was especially predominant in the runup to elections, and when coalition governments were in power. Most of the time, however, culture and norms played a more important role. These nuances are lost if we rely on one theoretical perspective only. In the end, an open-minded attitude is the best starting point for all research.

ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (today OSCE)
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Forces
DC’90	Defence Commission of 1990 (Forsvarskommissjonen av 1990)
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community (Norwegian abbreviation for EC)
EC	European Communities (today the European Union, EU)
EFTA	European Free Trade Agreement
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
IFOR	NATO Implementation Force
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
IR	International Relations
IRF	Immediate Reaction Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan
KFOR	Kosovo Force
LI	Liberal intergovernmentalism
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NRF	NATO Response Force
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
NOU	Norges Offentlige Utredninger (Norwegian Official Reports)
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SFOR	NATO Stabilisation Force
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
TEU	Treaty on European Union
ToA	Treaty of Amsterdam
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNISCAN	British-Scandinavian Cooperation Committee
VEU	Vestunionen (Norwegian translation of the WEU)
WEU	Western European Union
WU	Western Union, the WEU’s predecessor

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